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ABSTRACT

The possibilities for community-based learning at the secondary level are discussed. Experiential learning opportunities are perceived as legitimate experiences occurring in nonschool settings that may serve as alternatives to formal curriculum or as means for augmenting classroom learning. Practical suggestions are made for the teacher who wishes to develop a learning program of this type. Community opportunities are explored with a discussion of methods for obtaining satisfactory results and also problems that may be faced. Forms are appended as examples of types of records for individual students that may be used for evaluation purposes. (JD)

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LIVING AND LEARNING FOR CREDIT

By Barbara J. Shoup

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Living and Learning for Credit

By Barbara J. Shoup

Phi Delta Kappa
Bloomington, Indiana

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For

Freddi, Mike Jay, Joan,
Judy, Karen, Greg, Phil,
David, Lolie, Gary, and
The Phantom
who are always ready to try anything once.

With Special Thanks To:

The Learning Unlimited students whose good ideas have filled up this book.

Bob Barr and Vern Smith who have provided inspiration and a forum for teachers interested in changing the schools.

A. Barbara Pilon who gave me my first glimpse of what public schools could be.

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Foreword

This book is about life and learning and kids. It is about helping teachers and administrators open up classrooms to the vast learning opportunities outside the school. It is also something of a rarity in educational literature. It is written by a teacher. It is filled with the nuts-and-bolts kinds of things teachers and administrators so desperately need to know — everything from learning contracts to how to deal with legal liability. It is also a scrapbook and a diary. It is filled with stories and descriptions of activities that worked and "red alerts" to avoid those that didn't. In a very real sense, it is a road map to help teachers, students, and administrators find their way out of classrooms and school buildings into the rich mosaic of life today.

Until rather recently, the question of where learning should take place was never seriously considered. Everyone knew and accepted that formal learning occurred in classrooms under the direction of a teacher. Yes, there have long been field trips to local factories and work-study programs, but for the serious search for knowledge only the teacher-centered classroom would do. Since 1970 this pattern has clearly begun to change. Public school students can now be found learning in aircraft hangars, hospitals, police stations, funeral homes, computer centers, newspaper offices, legal offices, day care centers, museums, state legislatures, convalescent homes, prisons, and so on.

Formal public school learning experiences now can increasingly be found just about anywhere. School districts provide students with opportunities for internships, voluntary service, extended travel, cultural exchanges, tutoring, and even sabbatical leaves. There are also schools-without-walls, career learning centers, and magnet schools that maximize the use of community resources for learning. Perhaps more important, these experiential learning opportunities now occurring in nonschool settings have gone far beyond the traditional field trips and work-study programs. Increasingly they are being perceived as legitimate, substantive learning experiences. Such, of course, has not always been the case.

The idea that learning could somehow occur from experience was simply too much for all those educators who had invested a lifetime in straight rows and raised hands, recitation, and remembering. Learning by doing was seen not merely as a frivolous educational fad dreamed up by some naive theorist; it was seen as a cancer, gnawing away at content and academic standards. Learning by doing was treated as the arch enemy of formal learning and a distraction to educators who were about the serious business of building massive educational facilities to house all those gymnasia, language labs, media centers, large group/small group instructional areas and classrooms filled with simulation games, multi-media kits, overhead projectors, maps, dictionaries, textbooks with appropriate reading levels, and even auto-tutorial, self-instructional carrels.

The idea of learning through experiences has a growing company of impressive support. Today, everyone from the U.S. Office of Education to the National Association of Secondary School Principals has called for increasing the opportunity for student learning beyond the classroom walls. Others like the National Commission on Resources for Youth has helped to identify exemplary school programs and publish descriptions and directories. Phi Delta Kappa has also moved forceably in this area. Through its Task Force on Compulsory Education and Transitions for Youth, it has publicized the importance of out-of-school learning through the *Walkabout Newsletter*. All of these organizations and agencies tend to agree on several key issues:

> The information-rich media society has rendered "information-giving" as no longer the primary function of schools.
>
> Far from assisting youth in the process of moving toward maturity and adulthood, schools may in fact be retarding this process.
>
> Schools tend to isolate youth and increasingly separate them from significant contact with older adults, other than parents and teachers.
>
> Perhaps most important, there is increasing agreement among the members of these organizations and agencies that while some things must be learned in school, some things can never be learned in school.

Most of the events that have molded us and made us what we are today did not occur in a classroom. Those things most profound and most provocative in our lives are usually tied to experiences. While some kinds of learning require classrooms, teachers, books, and dictionaries, other kinds demand interaction, decision making, observation, and participation. Few would disagree with this idea when talking about driver education, but educators increasingly are recognizing equally important experiential learning outside the classroom.

Recognition of the importance of experiential learning, however, is only the first step. The task of planning, developing, and incorporating out-of-school learning activities into public schools has proven to be extremely difficult. In recent years, a growing number of schools throughout the country have become small islands of experimentation as they pioneered in developing the skills and strategies necessary to make experiential learning a reality. Learning Unlimited, a small alternative school-within-a-school at North Central High School in Indianapolis, Indiana, is one such school. It has earned the reputation for being one of the truly innovative alternative secondary school programs in the United States; it is also generally recognized as one of the highest quality. Out of its day-to-day laboratory for learning, through trial and error, victories and defeats, the insights and understandings that have been discovered at Learning Unlimited are now ready to be shared with others. Barbara Shoup, a teacher at the school, has documented the story of Learning Unlimited and now offers it to all who would join her and her students in moving outside the school.

Barbara Shoup has written more than a book. It is, in fact, a self-instructional lab manual for active teachers. It's everything you ever wanted to know about action learning; it's a do-it-yourself handbook that will soon be found on teachers' desks and in their briefcases. It is not filled with theories; it includes firsthand, down-to-earth descriptions of the "what and how" when taking learning beyond the classroom and making the experiences count in the lives of students.

When Barbara Shoup warns of the dangers and frustrations that can be encountered, her scars are showing. She speaks with authority; she speaks from experience. She characterizes the best of what quality teaching is all about. She is energetic, enthusiastic, and smart. She is also deeply dedicated to her students, dedicated not so much to teaching them, but to helping them learn. Her firsthand descriptions of her students and their learning activities comprise an encyclopedia of insight and feeling that should prove invaluable to teachers everywhere.

I have long known Barbara Shoup as a friend, a colleague, and an outstanding teacher. How exciting it is to see her enthusiasm and energy and concern expressed in this book! It may never become a "best seller" in the commercial trade book sense, but I feel sure that in the word-of-mouth recommendations of teachers, it will come to find a place of great respect. If you are a tough, talented classroom teacher, hell bent on helping kids, you have come to the right place. Read on, my friend; an exciting trip starts on the next page.

Robert D. Barr
School of Education
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

Introduction

Learning, I think, can be compared to a journey. Regardless of where you go, you become a somewhat different person because of the experience. Perhaps learning will result in an even stronger commitment to something you already believed; perhaps it will create the tiniest opening of a new door and thus change your whole perspective on life. Webster's definition of *journey*, "a traveling from one place to another," does not offer any clues as to what kind of people travel or why, leaving to our imagination innumerable possibilities. Perhaps you are a school administrator seeking funds for an innovative program, a teacher tired of the old routine, or a curriculum planner who wants to improve the reading program. You could be a student of education, striving to become a teacher who is a little less boring than many of those you had to endure; or a parent concerned about sending your child every morning into what you see as a vast wasteland. Maybe you are one of the millions of kids who spend most of their time gazing out school windows at the world outside. Whoever you are, the fact that you have picked up this book shows that education interests you. You are, at least, toying with the idea of change. Whether traveling in your imagination or on the road, having a final goal in mind should enrich your journey.

Living and Learning for Credit explores the possibilities for community-based learning at the secondary level. Most of the examples are drawn from the experiences of students in Learning Unlimited, an alternative program at North Central High School in Indianapolis, Indiana. Other examples are drawn from my travels and correspondence with people in community-based programs in other communities. In examining the specifics of a few thriving programs, practical suggestions on how resources in any community can be used to enrich the learning of high school students emerge.

You will not be able to duplicate all of the ideas you find here. Hopefully, they will act as springboards for projects and experiments geared to your own particular circumstances. Depending on your personality and interests and the nature of your school and

community, your experiments will be unique and constantly changing.

So, the road is open and inviting, if at times a little rocky. The scenery is to be a product of your imagination and ingenuity, and the destination, yours alone.

Bon Voyage!

Living and Learning for Credit

By Barbara J. Shoup

Phi Delta Kappa
Bloomington, Indiana

1. The Call of the Wild — A Rationale

Photo by Jeff Sloman

The personnel director of a large hotel talks to a business student about the characteristics of a good employee.

Change is often precipitated by a feeling of restlessness with the present. As educators study the problems of American high schools, there is an ever-increasing call for change. We hear reports on the frightening incidence of violence in the schools. Students are not learning to read; many graduate without learning to balance a checkbook. Integration has created controversy in large urban districts; many teachers seem unwilling or unable to change. In spite of efforts to counteract it, the high school dropout syndrome is as prevalent as ever.

A number of educators cry out for more "open education"; an equal number preach "back to basics". And then there are always the die-hards who see no real problem and remain complacent with a belief in the "I made it and survived" philosophy.

There is a movement in education today that seeks to provide a wide variety of options for all students. Proponents of alternative education believe that there is no single answer to the problems facing today's high schools. No one kind of school can satisfy the needs of all students. Throughout the U.S., alternative schools and programs are emerging, committed to experimenting with new modes of teaching and learning.

School administrators have finally begun to accept the fact that teachers have different teaching styles and that these styles develop from each individual's unique personality and experience. It is time to acknowledge that students have different learning styles. Some students learn best in a highly structured, traditional environment. Some work best when they can comfortably pace their learning to their own needs and abilities. Certain students are inspired to learn more when competing against classmates; others are threatened by competition. Experience is the best teacher for many students who need to get away from the school setting and involve themselves in practical experiences in order to

understand fully a subject area. Some students like to hole up in the library and research a subject thoroughly. One's learning style depends on personality, innate intelligence, and the perception of the world one will face as an adult; it may vary from subject to subject depending on one's level of interest and ability. Different people need different kinds of education. The coming together within a school of a wide variety of styles of teaching and learning can generate a tremendous amount of excitement and greatly stimulate a student's desire to learn. Adapting to students' differing learning styles may well be the key to solving some of the problems in our high schools.

Much research has been done in the last few years pointing out the need for new educational options for youth. The National Commission on Resources for Youth, in particular, has identified and defined new roles for adolescents, calling for greater participation of youth in the community at large. Rather than documenting the research at this time, I feel it is more valuable to share with you a number of good ideas about developing community-based learning experiences for high school students that you can implement in some form in your own community.

The idea of community-based education is not new. In a time when school was not compulsory and families took much of the responsibility for educating their children, most adolescents learned from their parents and other people in the community. Children whose parents owned businesses or farms helped their parents out regularly. Thus, they learned the business or trade thoroughly and, more often than not, eventually took it over. They also learned and practiced enough reading, writing, and ciphering to survive. Those who aspired to a profession arranged to study with a person practicing it. Thus, direct observations, participation, and internships, mainstays of many innovative programs, are hardly novel.

To an increasing number of today's teen-agers, high school is nothing more than a ticket to something else, part of the "dues" a person must pay before taking up life's work. Students often complain that school is boring. It is meaningless to them, they say, and it does not do much to prepare them for the world they will soon face as adults. As adolescents become increasingly mobile and aware of the world around them, they seem to lead a double existence: school learning vs. real life.

A good community learning program can provide a link between learning and life that makes school become meaningful and exciting. "We live *and* learn." This trite but true maxim might serve well as a motto to those interested in changing the schools. The

longer we live, the more we learn about life. The two cannot be divorced, and those who work with youth in our schools would do well to keep that in mind.

2. Home Slide Show — An Argument for a Change of Scene

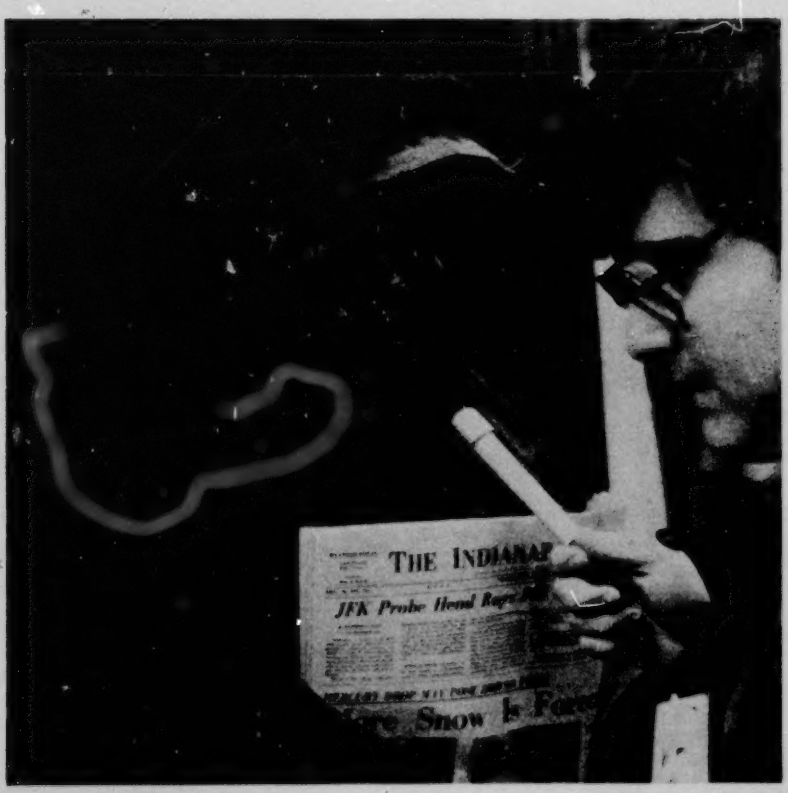

Photo by Mike Sacks

A newspaper vendor on a city street makes a fascinating subject for a student interview.

Sifting through travel folders, we can speculate about a variety of prospective journeys. Inviting, full-color photos tantalize us with scenes and activities of an area, and when combined with the kind of mood we want to evoke in our travels, these scenes build our anticipation.

If you are considering a journey into the world of community-based learning, a knowledge of some of its positive aspects may be valuable to you in setting goals and gaining the support you need to get some projects off the ground. Let me describe to you a narrative slide show presented by an experienced traveler to help you decide if the trip will be worth your time and effort.

Slide #1: Learning Comes Alive

A small group of students, a teacher, and a middle-aged man are sitting in a comfortably funished room. Warm and vibrant colors abound, and family pictures dot the walls. Some of the students are sprawled on the floor with large, brightly colored pillows; a hearty fire crackles on the grate. The scene's focal point is the middle-aged man in the easy chair. He is speaking; his expression is intense, and his hand is raised in a gesture. Cokes and bowls of popcorn are untouched as the students listen with rapt attention.

The man, once a prisoner at Auschwitz, is speaking to a small group of history students about his experiences. After relating his daring attempts to escape, he described his anguish at watching his wife and children shuffle away from him as they stood in a line that was arbitrarily divided by a towering German soldier. He showed them the number tatooed on his arm in purple ink. His descriptions of the desolate existence brought to life the realities of war and the ultimate triumph of the human spirit.

Community-based learning makes a subject area come alive. Remember studying boring battles of all those wars, memorizing the dates and names and places that immediately fled your mind upon completing the semester test? There are people everywhere who remember events of contemporary history with great clarity. Elderly people love to have the chance to share their perspectives on life; nursing homes and senior citizen centers usually welcome young people who want to learn. Textbook history and library research can be vastly enriched through recording oral history. Students may learn the facts surrounding the Great Depression, but will come to a greater understanding of its effect on one generation of Americans by listening to a few people talk about how they personally survived it. Prohibition is an interesting chapter in American history, but a true-to-life account of bootleggers and bathtub gin parties may stimulate a desire for in-depth research on the era.

Adding a bit of concrete detail to the abstract philosophies and dry facts of any subject area will increase its palatability without watering down the academic content. English teachers beg their students to rewrite, but few of the students really understand why. One session with a magazine editor or writer may inject the reality needed to convince a lot of students that this is a necessary process for all writing. This kind of session will provide a whole new perspective on English — one that may make some of the endless exercises and compositions seem more reasonable.

When a subject area comes alive for students, they *want* to learn more about it. In many cases, a foray into the community may stimulate voracious reading and research on a topic.

Slide #2: Learning Can Occur Anywhere

In a smoke-filled room, a group of adults and one teen-aged girl are seated around a massive oak table. Papers are spread everywhere; charts and graphs are hanging on the walls. Several of the people are drinking coffee. One man surreptitiously glances at his watch; another is talking on the telephone. A woman is pointing to one of the charts, looking very frustrated. An open window shows that it is dark outside; the clock indicates it is 11:35 p.m.

The teen-ager is attending a legislative committee meeting as part of a project she is undertaking on the governmental process. She is actively following a bill from its inception to its final acceptance or rejection. Through her experiences at the state house, she has come to know a number of legislators personally and has gained considerable practical knowledge about how the democratic system works.

Often the valuable learning a person experiences as a natural part of growing up is discounted by the schools because it is not academic in nature. If we truly believe that living and learning are inseparable, we know how unrealistic this is. Everything that a person learns contributes to a wider understanding of the world at large. Thus, while students' experiences observing or interacting with people may have nothing specifically to do with school, it adds greatly to their abilities to understand human nature. The more experiences students have with the human condition, the better they will be able to understand the forces behind writing a great novel, winning an election, running a business, or committing a crime. Greater exposure to the adult world contributes to maturity. With maturity comes the self-discipline and commitment necessary to pursue the more rigorous academic approaches to subject matter.

Other benefits of community-based learning are less abstract. Students of child psychology may learn a great deal about the developmental stages of children by working in a school or day-care center. Students of architecture will benefit from walking tours of neighborhoods built as a city spread out.

Often an experience will crystalize an academic theory or concept. Working for a person who owns a small business may bring the elements of an introductory business course into a meaningful whole. Shadowing a legislator may trigger a working understanding of how the branches of government work.

When students realize learning can occur anywhere and that all learning is legitimate, then learning no longer seems so much like work, but begins to take on the nature of a huge jigsaw puzzle — when will the next piece appear, and how will it fit into the framework of the puzzle? The coming together of the pieces can be an exciting, contagious experience. A classroom is a good place to come together to share the varied experiences and knowledge of a number of people. We learn in many ways and in many places. Failures and successes, insights and disappointments all add to the ongoing process of education that begins the day we are born and ends the day we die.

Slide #3: The Interrelationship of the Disciplines

A small group of students and a teacher are resting under a gnarled tree. Some are lying with their heads on their packs; one leans against the tree trunk reading a book. A few others are snacking on fruit while they talk. The relentless sun bakes the surround-

ing desert and the tree casts its shadow beyond the group to touch protectively a small cluster of desert flowers that tentatively poke through the earth. The land around the group is flat and the sand tones provide a sharp contrast to the brightly colored packs and clothing of the hikers.

The students, several of them American Indians and the rest travelers from the midwest, have been living together for several weeks in a dormitory on a Navajo reservation in Arizona. To prepare for the experience the Anglo students had taken a course in Indian culture that combined literature, sociology, psychology, history, science, and government with practical and interpersonal skills. The trip to Arizona is the culmination of their in-depth study of the American Indian.

Individuals are molded by their physical environments, their cultural history, and their personal relationships. The land is the original shaper of a people who use it to fulfill their survival needs. A people's history stems from their struggle with their environment; from this struggle their values emerge. Literature, whether written or oral, grows from a blend of history and personal and societal values.

Life cannot be divided into neat little parcels; nor can learning. An interdisciplinary approach to education is more exciting, more sensible, and easily adaptable to community-based activities. Trips, whether long or short, provide a setting for showing how all subject areas relate. As the lines separating the disciplines begin to fade, learning becomes integrated into a meaningful whole. Students are increasingly able to appreciate specialized areas of knowledge as they work toward total understanding. To comprehend truly the world and the motivations of the people in it, students must be a part of it.

Slide #4: Career Exploration

A teen-aged boy sits with a policeman in front of a huge computer terminal. They are surrounded by a number of similar terminals, and many people bustle about intent on their work. Above their terminal is a large screen showing the sectors of the city; lights on the screen indicate the placement of patrol cars. The man is talking into a radio while adjusting some buttons and switches on the terminal. The boy reads a computer printout as it emerges from a teletype machine. Both have on a set of earphones. Information concerning calls and police runs flashes on a television screen at one

end of the terminal. Large windows at one end of the room frame a panoramic view of the city.

The student, who is interested in police work as a career, has arranged a semester-long internship with the police department. In addition to affording the student an opportunity for some practical experience in an area of vital interest to him, the internship fulfills some of the requirements for a sociology class. Assigned to the head of the public relations department, the student spends two afternoons a week and as much of his spare time as possible at headquarters. Over the course of the semester, he has had experiences in nearly every department and has spent several days shadowing police officers. He has learned much about the nature of police work, gaining a realistic outlook on its advantages and disadvantages.

Aside from administering a battery of tests that attempt to measure vocational potential, high schools take little responsibility for helping students explore career possibilities. Vocational programs are generally limited to those students who want to learn a trade or secretarial skills; career exploration on the part of students who are interested in fields like business, law, teaching, science, medicine, and the arts is typically not a part of the college preparatory curriculum.

To make good career decisions, students need to explore the realities of a variety of kinds of work. In many cases, their experiences provide enrichment for an academic area of study. Hospital work is directly related to health, as well as to a number of science classes. Court observations enrich a student's understanding of government and other social studies areas. English skills are improved by taking on any position of responsibility that requires effective communication.

As students mature and start to take on adult roles earlier, they begin to consider careers that best fit their needs and abilities. Programs that stress community-based learning provide natural avenues for this kind of exploration.

Slide #5: Volunteer Service

In a cheerfully decorated recreation room, a teen-aged girl is sitting at a card table with three elderly ladies. Each has cards in her hand; the girl is smiling as she draws a card from the pile in the middle of the table. In the background other elderly people can be seen reading, writing, and doing needlework. Some are playing

chess and checkers. A small group of people are gathered in one corner around a television set.

The girl is working on a semester-long project involving elderly Americans. She goes two afternoons a week to a senior citizen's center to gain a better understanding of the problems facing citizens who are 65 and older. While there, she plays cards, helps with letter writing, and reads to those with failing sight. Often she spends time talking to people about their families and their lives. She will gain sociology and English credit for her project; but perhaps more important, she is giving some lonely people a priceless kind of friendship and companionship.

Community-based education is a two-way street. While students learn important practical skills and enrich their academic study, many businesses, institutions, and agencies gain valuable volunteer service.

Work in a variety of capacities at a hospital or nursing home can give a student a deeper understanding of the sciences and human relationships, in addition to lightening the loads of the medical staff by offering help and companionship to the patients. Student aides working with children in schools gain insight into the psychology and development of children while relieving the teachers to spend more time helping students individually. Math and organizational skills can be sharpened by taking on the responsibility for a charitable fund-raising project.

Community-based learning gets the student out of the narrow confines of the school into a world that needs all the help it can get. The indomitable enthusiasm of youth can offer a fresh perspective to many volunteer services.

Slide #6: Self Image

A teen-aged youth surrounded by a group of children perches somewhat precariously on a small chair. Brightly colored posters and pictures decorate the walls. He holds up a card with some numbers on it for the children to see. One little boy, grimacing, waves his hand wildly. A teacher can be seen in the background, standing at the blackboard. She is talking with a larger group of students sitting at their desks.

The teen-ager has spent most of his own school years in special classes for slow students. Difficulty with basic multiplication has made his business math class very hard for him. Knowing it embar-

rassed him to be tutored on such a fundamental skill, his teacher encouraged him to work as an aide in a third grade class.

During his first days at the school, he helped with art and supervised games at recess. The third graders, always impressed by working with someone from the high school world, liked him and began to look forward to his visits. After a few weeks, the teacher had him listen to her lessons on multiplication. She then gave him the responsibility of grading the drill sheets, usually giving him one to take home to do for a grading key. As he became more confident of his skills, he began to tutor and drill individual students who needed help. His multiplication skills improved enough to affect his business math grade significantly. His teacher also noticed he was a little more outgoing and seemed to feel more at ease with other students.

In our society, the measure of an adolescent's success is largely determined by his performance at school. Students without a supportive family or satisfying out-of-school activities may depend on their high school grade cards for feedback about themselves. Placing a student in a learning situation away from school may cause him to re-evaluate his perception of himself. A student who has never been successful in the classroom may handle himself quite competently in an internship situation. A brilliant student, on the other hand, may realize that his intelligence is worth little if he cannot communicate adequately with people.

It is important for adolescents to have opportunities to experience success in a wide variety of activities beyond the confines of traditional school curricula.

Slide #7: New Relationships with Teachers

In a large area faintly resembling a classroom, teachers' desks line the walls. Crates serving as storage areas house fish tanks, shells, plants, and animal cages as well as a large number of books. On blackboards colorful signs announce upcoming events. Posters, prints, and student graffiti cover the remaining wall spaces. Student desks are arranged in a variety of configurations about the center of the room. In one corner students are gathered in a small circle with books open on their desks. The teacher, seated comfortably on an office-type swivel chair, gestures as he talks to the group. On the other side of the room, a teacher and student sit talking. The student holds a map of the city and is pointing to it as he speaks. The teacher listens intently.

With the approval of his history teacher, this student completed a six-week internship with a foundation involved in preserving historic landmarks. During this time he studied a number of architectural styles represented in the city and analyzed how they reflected the city's growth and expansion. The two are discussing the results of his findings. The student's grade will depend on his own evaluation of his experience as well as on evaluations by the teacher and the community resource person with whom he worked.

Today's adolescents lead isolated lives. Too old to be treated as children, they are usually considered too young to participate in the adult world. In this limbo, teen-agers rarely have the chance to develop close relationships with adults. Perhaps one of the most valuable side effects of the student-teacher relationships growing out of community-based learning experiences are the opportunities for adolescents to build meaningful relationships with a number of responsible adults.

As students take on responsibility for their own learning, the role of the teacher changes. Still a crucial part of the learning process, the teacher becomes less a lecturer, grader, and disciplinarian and more a facilitator, guide, and partner. He helps students structure meaningful learning experiences and helps them learn to evaluate their work objectively. Responsible for seeing that each student continues to challenge himself, the teacher also shares his insights and expertise. These new student-teacher relationships break down traditional barriers between adolescents and adults. Teacher and student alike have the freedom to go about the business of learning and growing.

Slide #8: Transition from Adolescence to Adulthood

In a small office a girl sits bent over a ledger. Her roll-top desk is cluttered with yellow invoices and freshly sharpened pencils. Cascades of leaves hang from the plants over the desk. A wide-brimmed hat hangs jauntily from an antique hat rack and a group of brightly colored dresses lie across a sofa. A woman sits on the floor marking small, white price tags.

As part of a class in business management, this girl is working part time in a small dress shop. She works as a clerk most of the time, but once a week she uses her accounting skills to work on the books. The proprietor, with the approval of the teacher, has worked

out a schedule that will give the student experience in all facets of a small retail business. The girl receives a minimum wage for her work, and the proprietor has the services of a dependable, enthusiastic employee.

Parents and teachers commonly complain that teen-agers are selfish, immature, and undependable. They remember the "good old days" when high school students did not question the infinite wisdom and authority of their parents or of the state-dictated curriculum. Bewailing the state of today's students will do little to solve the problems in our schools, but experiences in community-based learning may be one way of helping high school students overcome some of the stultifying patterns of adolescence.

When students leave the school to learn in the community, they must take on new responsibilities. To arrange new experiences, they must learn to communicate their needs effectively. Through juggling their regular class work and community commitments, they learn to set priorities and often experience the frustrations with which adults must learn to cope.

Students free to explore career possibilities often learn a lot about themselves in relation to the world of work. One student who was determined to become a first-grade teacher was rudely awakened after a semester as a teacher's aide. The reality of grading endless workbooks, conducting phonics drills, and struggling with a dozen stubborn rubber boots every day seemed confining. She learned, through a subsequent experience, that she enjoyed older children much more; they responded more positively to her personality and talents.

Students in alternative programs work in a variety of capacities in areas that interest them as career possibilities and that they find enriching or exciting. Whether the experience is rewarding or disappointing, its value comes from the new dimension it brings to their lives and sharpened perception it provides of the responsibilities in one facet of the adult world.

Slide #9: Decisions, Priorities, and Commitments

A nicely dressed teen-aged boy is talking on the telephone and writing something in a notebook. He is seated at a desk in a small office that is cluttered with papers, textbooks, and plants. Large boxes are stacked in one corner; the blackboard that dominates one

wall is covered with telephone numbers and scrawled messages. A few students are milling around; one, obviously waiting, eyes the telephone and its user impatiently.

Working on a project that entails a survey of people working in a variety of psychology-related fields, he is calling to double check appointments for some interviews he has set up for the afternoon. He has made arrangements to spend most of the day at a number of community sites interviewing and observing. He will combine his firsthand experiences with some academic research for his final report.

Every summer people emerge from their high school reunions amazed at the successes and failures of some of their classmates. Often, the person voted most likely to succeed is one who has accomplished little in his adult life. The quiet, average student may have become a highly successful business or professional person. Success or failure in high school is not always a reliable indicator of a person's ability to function as an adult.

A student's success in high school is generally measured by grades, athletic ability, or popularity. Most high schools encourage a prolonged adolescence, a time when teen-agers are isolated from the adult world and their interests directed primarily toward their appearance, their extracurricular activities, and their attractiveness to the opposite sex. High schools rarely give students the opportunity to make decisions or set priorities; these skills must be taught at home or learned on the job. Students graduate knowing little about how one goes about earning the turst and respect of adults.

Students in a community-based program must learn to balance their community activities with their academic commitments. Which is more important — a field trip, which would undoubtedly be fun and at least somewhat educational, or a day at the library to finish up the research for an important term paper due at the end of the week? Given more responsibility for their own education, students must learn to make decisions and set priorities. They can often see direct and immediate results from the decisions they make.

As students learn to move about in the adult world, they gain experience in how to earn the respect of the people they work with. They learn firsthand the effects of undependability. The consequences of turning in a term paper a day late are generally nothing compared to the irritation of a successful lawyer who has allotted valuable time for an interview with a student who arrives 10

minutes late. The lame excuse, "I'm so sorry, I forgot all about our meeting today," is not likely to get that student a second interview!

Students involved extensively in community activities learn how to communicate on an equal basis with adults. By functioning in the adult world, they gradually lose interest in the protected society of the typical adolescent. When they leave high school, it is without regret. They feel confident and enthusiastic about moving on to the next stage of their lives.

Slide #10: Life Learners

A girl is walking down the beach alone, her long hair blowing behind her in the wind. A few fishermen dot a distant jetty. A wave recedes, swirling around her feet and leaving the bottom of her jeans dark blue and heavy. In her hand she holds a shell; a book is peeping out of her back pocket.

In a letter to one of her former teachers, this student wrote, "No matter what I am doing, I cannot help but learn something. When I walk down the beach I automatically identify and classify the shells; when I see an unfamiliar tree, I want to know its name."

While in high school the girl participated in a marine biology class that culminated in a two-week trip to the Florida Keys. The basic marine biology course was taught in the classroom and included a class in scuba diving. On the way to the Keys, the group visited colleges and Civil War memorials. They spent some time in Miami to study the Cuban culture and surveyed the sociology of retirement towns like Sarasota and St. Petersburg. In the Okefenokee swamp, they observed delicately striped tree snails in their own habitat. Upon reaching the Keys, a strenuous schedule of diving, class work, and recreation began. Classes were held daily on the beach, where students identified the shells and plants they found.

Moving learning away from the classroom often leaves an indelible mark on a student. When educational experiences expand her world, her mind automatically opens wider. With this expansion comes a great curiosity and a hunger to know more. Released from the confines of the classroom and library, students begin to perceive the whole world as a kind of school. Those who have been involved in programs that offer a balance of academic and concrete learning experiences often leave high school with a love of learning that sticks with them. Learning is internalized as a personal

value and is not dependent on grades or diplomas to justify it. Students become "life learners" because they constantly push for more knowledge and understanding of themselves and their world.

3. Tried and True Methods of Community-Based Learning

Photo by Jeff Sloman

A government student researches a legal issue.

If the slide show in the previous chapter has piqued your interest and you have decided to continue on this trip, what next? Anticipating your journey, you may wonder if you will know what to do when you get there. What are the sights that everyone should see? What are the most popular places to visit? What are some of the out-of-the-way spots that might be fun to check out?

Most guidebooks offer a number of tours; whether organized on a step-by-step basis or simply set up to make the traveler aware of all the points of interest in an area, tours are helpful by providing suggestions so people can plan their journey according to their individual needs and interests. Time plays a major part in choosing places to visit, and the special interests of the people involved are important too.

Looking at a guidebook, we choose to visit places we feel will best fit the style of vacation or journey we would like to have. Some people travel for enrichment, some for adventure, and some to learn some very definite things. Your travel style affects the kind of tours you create for yourself. From the options offered here, choose those that best fit your style of teaching or learning and the nature and needs of your community. Combine them, if you can, to create new kinds of experiences for yourself and those who will travel along the road with you.

Field Trips

Probably the most familiar of community-based learning activities are field trips. They are short, lasting only a day or part of a day, and are usually planned with a very specific goal in mind. The visit to a fire station in kindergarten or the first grade tour of a museum or zoo are familiar examples. Unfortunately, few high

school teachers take their students on field trips. They are inconvenient to schedule and can be expensive. Arrangements must be made for a substitute teacher, and students must be excused from other classes. It is often difficult to find a willing parent to accompany the class, and in most cases, it is impossible for a teacher to supervise 35-40 students alone.

For our purposes here, a field trip is defined as a group of students, usually accompanied by a teacher, who visit a place in the community to enrich their academic experience. Community-based learning programs can be organized in such a way that teachers can easily arrange to take field trips with small groups of students, thus alleviating the supervision and transportation problems of large groups. Usually one or two people can arrange to drive. In some cases, public transportation is available when traveling in small groups and parent help is not necessary. Field trips can also be taken by individuals or groups of two or three students without a teacher.

Teachers in traditional programs may hesitate at the idea of sending out students on their own, but be assured that it's not impossible! Bob Faris, a teacher at North Central High School in Indianapolis, has been doing it for years. He has designed an inquiry government course for seniors that makes wide use of community resources, and his students earn academic credit for a wide variety of practical experiences. To augment their academic reading and research, students have arranged individual tours of the juvenile center and the state house. They have spent time working in government agencies and have used the shadowing technique with legislators. Some have worked as aides to government officials, others have done extensive political campaign work. They have attended hearings, legislative committee meetings, and speeches in the state legislature. Many students have spent time observing in the courts and interviewing lawyers and judges. A lot of these activities are done on school time, with students taking on the responsibility of making up class work they miss. Some are done after school and on Saturdays. Students involved in Faris' government classes gain a more practical understanding of how our government works than they would by spending the semester in the classroom with a textbook.

The possibilities for field trips for small groups of students or for individuals are endless. Most cities have a number of possibilities: historic landmarks, memorials, museums, art galleries, and zoos. Smaller communities may lack some of the cultural resources of large cities, but they have banks, factories, courts, hospitals, and retail establishments.

The following are brief accounts of some field trips taken by Learning Unlimited students:

Women's Prison — A group of eight students and two staff members toured the Indiana Women's Prison. The tour guide, a prison inmate, was articulate about the meaning of the prison experience for most women. Because the group was small, students were able to visit the living quarters of the prisoners and were also able to meet and talk with some of the incarcerated women. The size of the group also made it possible for the tour guide to respond fully to all the questions asked.

Performances — Learning Unlimited students have attended rehearsals of the Indiana Repertory Theater and the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. The size of the group, again, was beneficial; in several instances, the students were able to talk with the performers on an informal basis.

Court Observations — Individuals or small groups of students have spent a day observing in the courts. Some students had a specific goal in mind: to watch a jury being picked or to watch a criminal trial; others preferred the experience of observing the system of justice at random in order to draw some personal conclusions. When students travel alone or in small groups, they are much more easily accommodated by the courts. No special arrangements need to be made. While at the courts, students often can talk with lawyers, judges, bailiffs, and other court personnel who can give students a broader perspective on what they are observing.

State Archives — Students interested in genealogy have visited the state library and archives that house old newspapers, documents, and other information pertinent to researching one's family tree. Individually or in small groups, students were able to get personal guidance from library personnel, again without making special arrangements ahead of time.

Industry — Learning Unlimited students have toured a number of factories and plants. In Indianapolis the Coca-Cola bottling plant is designed with tours in mind; through a series of huge picture windows, students can observe the fascinating bottling procedure. The smaller the group the better, since a smaller group size enables students and their guide to move about the area without inconvenience to the workers.

Magical Mystery Tour — This is an entertaining variation of the field trip idea used at Learning Unlimited. A staff member places a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board to announce community-based learning opportunities. The sheet lists only the day, time, and what the student should bring. Designed purely for enrichment,

spontaneity, and adventure, the Magical Mystery Tour goes to places a student probably would not think of visiting on his own: a glass blowing factory in a small town about 50 miles away, a picnic at a state park, a day at the race track, a tour of a nearby college. Although students always learn things on these trips, they are things that were learned spontaneously while having fun. The trips are geared for entertainment and relaxation, but they also emphasize learning as a desirable, enjoyable experience, and they often stimulate curiosity and the desire to travel and learn as much about the world as possible.

Determined and creative teachers can adapt field trips to most traditional teaching situations. For teachers fortunate enough to have the freedom of scheduling that many alternative schools and programs provide, the possibilities for field trips are infinite. To use field trips effectively, it is necessary for teachers to give responsibility to students for planning and executing meaningful experiences outside of the school setting.

Guest Speakers

If you find it impossible to get your class out of the school, it is almost always possible to bring the community into the classroom. Guest speakers can be used in many different ways. On a one-time basis, a speaker might be used to enrich an academic area being studied. Many businesses and institutions have public relations departments willing to send a representative to speak to students or other community groups. Universities usually have speakers bureaus featuring programs by experts in a wide variety of fields. In most cases, these speakers will come free of charge, for they serve an important public relations function for the business or institution they represent. However, occasionally they charge a nominal fee to cover expenses. Under these circumstances, schools sometimes have funds that can be tapped for special interest activities.

In addition to presenting stimulating programs, community resource people may be brought into the school to take an active part in student-planned academic activities. For example, judges and lawyers may preside over a mock court case. In one instance, a prominent lawyer presided over the murder trial of Shakespeare's Macbeth! Stockbrokers might visit an economics class to counsel small groups of students involved in making hypothetical investments in the stock market.

Using resource people in the classroom has many rewards. The students are stimulated by a change in routine, and a more practical perspective on the subject area they are studying may bring some life to it for them. Also, business and professional people have an opportunity to work with students by contributing their time and expertise to the school. Adults who are not parents of school-age children have little opportunity to be exposed to what is happening in education today. A healthy relationship between the school and the people in the community who support it benefits all involved.

Guest speakers may sometimes be used to structure a complete course. A pilot elective course at North Central High School, "The Emerging American Woman," was offered on a weekly basis for a semester to interested students. The course explored the changing roles of women from a number of perspectives. Each one-hour session was presented by a different community resource person. The history of women in the United States was presented by a professor from a local university who had a special interest in this area. A local women's center taught two sessions on women and work. A labor attorney covered equal opportunity and affirmative action plans as they related specifically to women. The topic "Women in Politics" was discussed by a professor of political science; a female lawyer talked of her professional difficulties in a traditionally male occupation. The course culminated in a discussion led by a psychiatrist entitled "The Psychology of Women: Are They Really Different from Men?" Students attended the class on a voluntary basis. Some arranged with teachers to be absent from a class one day a week; others used their lunch hour. Alternative program students wrote the seminar into learning contracts to gain credit in one or several of the courses they were taking.

North Central's alternative program, Learning Unlimited, also has used community resource people in courses on international culture and comparative religion. Because their attendance is voluntary, students who participate tend to be interested in and responsive to what these people have to say.

Beyond academic enrichment and career exploration, community resource people can also be helpful in teaching students important practical skills. Whether in a regular class, lunch hour seminars, or after-school workshops, students can learn many practical skills from adults. How to prepare income tax returns, basic home repairs, nutrition, what to do in case of an emergency, first aid, auto mechanics, and personal finance are just a few of the "survival skills" that students need to know to function efficiently as adults. Schools can take an active role in teaching these skills to students.

Community Classes

Field trips and speakers are easy ways to use a wide variety of community resources, but for a more extensive treatment of a topic, community classes may be the answer. Taught by community resource people, these classes may meet on a weekly or biweekly basis for several hours at a time; the scheduling is flexible to the needs of the people involved. They generally take place away from the school — at the instructor's office or an available conference room. There are many people in almost every community who would enjoy working with adolescents, especially when, as so often happens, they find themselves in a counseling role for a number of students who are considering a particular business or profession as a career possibility. Community classes have been used in a number of alternative schools where students are able to schedule relatively large blocks of time away from the classroom. Teachers in traditional programs can use the community class concept if evening, weekend, or late afternoon classes can be arranged.

As with so many community-based learning activities, there are infinite subject areas for classes. Examples run the gamut from glass blowing, auto mechanics, and karate, to law, writing for publication, and banking. Students may learn practical skills like how to do their own income tax returns, explore special interest areas like needlework or Renaissance art, or gain some insight into a possible career.

When planning community classes, it is important to have a clear understanding with the resource person concerning what he or she will teach. Students earning part of their academic credit for such classes need to know what will be covered in order to plan what else they need to schedule during the time period. When approaching a person about the possibility of teaching a class like this, it is always a good idea to have in mind exactly what you want the person to do. Of course, he may suggest other ways to utilize his special skills and talents.

David Shadel, a lawyer with Legal Services Organization in Indianapolis, taught two courses on law for Learning Unlimited. Using the textbook *Legal Guide for Laypeople*, which was written by the LSO staff, the course combined reading, lectures, discussion, research, and a series of observations in the courts. The class met weekly for nine weeks and focused on those aspects of law that Shadel thought were important for laypeople to understand.

A group of students interested in writing as a career met with the managing editor of *The Saturday Evening Post* in a weekly community class for six weeks. Using the bicentennial edition

of *The Saturday Evening Post* as a text, students read some of the outstanding articles and short stories by famous writers that had been published over the years. Class discussions focused on the differing treatments of universal themes and on identifying the selling points of some of the pieces. The students wrote short pieces knowing they would be examined by a professional editor. When the class was over the students turned in their writing and revisions to their English teachers for class credit.

Parents often make excellent teachers for community classes. Because of the involvement of their own children, they usually know the goals and procedures of community-based programs better than people you might call upon at random. An additional advantage, of course, is that they are familiar with the needs and capabilities of adolescents because they are around at least one all the time. This familiarity with the age group makes it easier for them to structure activities that are interesting and challenging to high school students.

Barring the availability of parents, I have had a fair measure of success by simply calling agencies, businesses, and institutions. Generally, I have more success going right to the top — presidents, editors, managers, etc. These are the people with the power, and usually any decision concerning time commitments by employees would have to be approved by them anyway. They often view the opportunity to work with young people as a good public relations effort and if they can't take on the responsibility themselves, they will assign an employee to take over. Also, they generally have risen to the top in their field because of their enthusiasm for and dedication to their line of work — they like what they do, and they like to talk about it almost as much as they like to do it! At any rate, it is easier than you might think to arrange for these kinds of experiences for students; it often takes a healthy dose of persistence, but when you succeed, the exciting opportunities for learning are a bountiful reward.

Probably the main problem in offering community classes for credit rests with the students themselves and with their regular teachers. Students often do not fully appreciate the generous contribution of business people when they offer several hours of their time for a community class. Lawyers, accountants, and other people who have only their time to sell actually lose money each time they block out time to spend with students. People on a salary may not lose money, but because of their many and varied responsibilities, time is equally valuable to them. Most owners of small businesses, like professionals, utilize every hour of the working day. The editor who served as instructor of the class for would-be writers actually gave up his lunch hour so that he could spend time

working with the students. Upon enrolling for a community class, a student needs to understand that his commitment is a serious one. Since students choose to participate in community classes, they should make every effort to attend every session and take the time to do well any work the instructor may assign.

Conflict with the regular teaching staff is another problem illustrated by the Leonia Alternative High School in New Jersey, which made extensive use of community volunteers for teaching credit elective courses to high school students. Conceived and strongly supported by the school board, the school offered a wide variety of community classes taught by such notable experts as actor Alan Alda; cellular biologist, Stanley Craine; anthropology professors Morton Klass, Morton Fried and Robert Murphy; and American literature professor and writer Sacvan Berkovitch. These volunteers were allowed to design their own courses and to evaluate their students. Four certified teachers assigned to the alternative high school supervised the volunteers, administered the program, taught state graduation requirements, and acted as advisors to the 80 students in the school.

The faculty and administration at the regular high school disapproved of the program from the beginning. Disturbed with the complete break with traditional ways of running a high school and the loss of many of their most creative students, they also feared for their job security. If the alternative school were successful in its wide use of community resources, they asked, who was to say that eventually the whole system would not be taken over by these distinguished, capable volunteers?

Several suits were filed by the Leonia Education Association and by several private citizens with the argument that, by nature of their work, the volunteers were employed by the school system and thus subject to the same certification regulations as salaried teaching personnel. The controversy seriously affected the morale of the teachers and students involved, to say nothing of the effect it had on the force of community volunteers whose civic-minded gesture of donating their precious time had put them in an embarrassing position while the argument waged around them.

The Leonia Education Association ultimately won the battle. Although the school board members had strongly supported the idea of the school, they chose not to pursue the case. Since then, all the original staff members of the alternative school have left the system. The alternative program that has been reinstituted in the high school at this point offers no community classes, and in the confusion and insecurity resulting from the lawsuits, the present staff has discontinued completely its use of volunteers, even in a supplementary role. As Vicky I. Karant pointed out in an article in

the *Phi Delta Kappan* (April, 1977), if he lived in Leonia today, Socrates could not teach a class for credit because he would not possess a valid New Jersey teaching certificate.

The experience of the Leonia Alternative High School is not meant to scare you away from the wide possibilities and rich rewards of using community resource people in the high school curriculum, but only to be a warning that problems do exist and are sometimes instigated by people you might least expect to oppose the quest for making secondary education more meaningful to adolescents. Teachers tend to be very defensive these days about job security and can be frightened off by programs they fear may decrease the need for certified personnel, as plummeting enrollments and tightened budgets have already done.

If you would like to offer some community classes, there are some precautions that may be taken to help insure success. To avoid the question of teacher certification with volunteers, any class offered for credit should be directly supervised and coordinated by a certified teacher. If you work with a competency-based curriculum, it is relatively easy to design a community class to meet a specific competency. Such requirements need not detract from the resource person's freedom to design his course, but it does provide a sharper focus for everyone involved. In most cases, it is possible to offer these classes not as a separate, credit-earning entity, but as one enriching facet to a credit course already offered by the institution. The amount of credit given the student would depend on the length and nature of the class. Was it primarily a series of lectures for which little or no outside work was expected? Was there extensive research involved? Did the person give regular reading and writing assignments?

To avoid questions about certification and to make the students a more cohesive unit, it is a good idea to have one meeting at school for each meeting in the community. If the class meets once a week away from the school, a weekly meeting at school to discuss the lecture or to give individual help on any problems with reading, writing, or research will give the students a stronger sense of responsibility and commitment to the resource person and his offering. If the students know that someone is keeping tabs on their progress and is concerned that they fulfill their commitments, they are more likely to take the experience seriously.

In any case, whenever a community class is offered, one faculty member, preferably one certified in the area in which the students will gain credit, should be aware of the goals and objectives of the course and be responsible for communicating with the instructor and students involved.

Internships

Like an apprenticeship, an internship gives a student the chance to learn firsthand how a business, agency, or institution operates. It provides a more in-depth experience than a field trip, series of observations, or interviews because the student actually takes on responsibilities appropriate to his own learning needs and the needs of the community resource person who agrees to help him.

Internships offer opportunities to explore career possibilities. One student applied to take a business law course with Learning Unlimited during her senior year in order to gain experience in the field of law. Determined, even as a child, to become a lawyer some day, she sought a variety of experiences that would help her better understand the disadvantages as well as the rewards of the legal profession. Observing in the courts one afternoon, she was greatly impressed by the techniques of one of the criminal lawyers presenting a case. When the session recessed, she introduced herself to him, complimenting him on his presentation of the case. She explained that she would like very much to arrange some kind of long-term work experience in a law office. He referred her immediately to his office manager who helped arrange an internship that would benefit both the student and the law firm. During the last semester of her senior year, she spent several afternoons a week working at the law firm. Basically, she worked as a clerk, filing documents with the court and running errands. She helped out in other areas when they needed her, answering the phone, transcribing tapes, and occasionally taking depositions. In return for her volunteer services, the lawyers went out of their way to answer her questions, to explain procedures, and to provide other experiences that shed light on what it is like to practice law. The internship greatly strengthened this student's resolve to go to law school; in fact, she is considering seriously the possibility of attending night school and clerking in a law firm during the day. "A family friend in law school now is kind of jealous because I'm getting a lot more exposure to law than she is," the student said as she related the value of her practical experience in the field.

In addition to career exploration, internships offer enrichment to textbook learning. Government students learn the practical aspects of democracy through internship experiences in city, state, and federal agencies. Students studying French gain valuable insight into the culture through an internship in an embassy or consulate or even by working in a restaurant specializing in French cuisine. A greenhouse internship makes botany come alive.

To be effective, internships must be undertaken on a fairly

long-term basis. Going somewhere once a week for six weeks may teach the student a lot, but will provide little time for him to take on responsibilities and become a contributing member of the team. Most students find they need a minimum of one visit per week for a semester to gain much satisfaction from an internship experience. Also important is scheduling the internship during a fairly large time block such as most of a morning or an afternoon, in order to get a feel for the daily routine.

The possibilities for internships are limited only by the extent of your imagination. They may be arranged through personal contacts with parents and teachers or by simply leafing through the Yellow Pages. Learning Unlimited utilizes internship experiences extensively and has had a large measure of success finding placements. Most people are anxious to help students gain practical experiences whenever they can, and if they cannot provide internships themselves, they are often helpful in providing names of other businesses and agencies that might be willing to work with students.

For the most part, Learning Unlimited students arrange their own internships. Since they know best what they need and what they are willing to give in return, it is often easier for them to make the arrangements themselves. Their teachers must approve their choice of internship and arrange for an evaluation by the resource person in order to give a grade or earn credits.

In the process of planning internships, students gain a number of valuable skills. They must learn to identify their needs and then present an articulate request to a resource person that clearly communicates those needs and specifies the resource person's commitment of time and responsibility. Students gain important experience using the telephone when exploring possibilities for interships with a number of resources, and they learn how to conduct themselves during interviews that will closely approximate those they will have when searching for jobs.

Internships are a vital component of any inclusive community-based learning program. As with other components, students need to appreciate the service that resource people render by offering them constructive exposure to the adult world. It is crucial that each party in the internship relationship be well aware of the other's expectations; the student should know what the resource person needs from him in terms of scheduling and responsibilities; the resource person needs to know exactly what the student hopes to gain from his experience. A contract clarifies these commitments and is an effective, simple way of record keeping. Red tape should be avoided at all costs! Resource people have neither the time nor the inclination to fill in tedious forms sent out by the

school. A simple contract, filled out by the student and signed by his teacher and the resource person, should suffice. Most resource people will gladly write an evaluation of a student's work at the end of the internship.

More than any other community-based activity, internships help students learn to function competently in the adult world. Many of the tasks they take on have measurable consequences: if they write business letters, the letters are sent to real people for specific reasons; if they do research, it is done to be used by someone in a decision-making position. Because the experiences are extended ones, students have opportunities to develop working relationships with adults and to feel the satisfaction of a job well done.

Intensives

Intensives, or cross-country trips, are learning experiences away from the school setting that may last from several days to a number of weeks. Intensives may be taken by groups of students or by individuals with or without teachers. Crucial to the success of these kinds of trips are student planning and fund raising. Students need to play a major part in setting the goals for the intensive.

Alternative schools with flexible scheduling lend themselves best to group traveling; however, teachers in traditional schools who want this kind of experience have planned summer trips with students. For a number of years, many schools have offered opportunities for foreign travel to students and teachers involved in the study of foreign languages. Highly successful in most instances, the trips could easily be adapted to domestic travel with smaller groups and for shorter periods of time, perhaps to visit historic sites or to study different ecological environments.

North Central's Learning Unlimited uses intensives frequently. Students and teachers have traveled through nearly all of the continental U.S. en route to their various destinations. Students have studied marine biology in the Florida Keys; they have lived and worked on the Navajo reservation at Rough Rock, Arizona. Students initiated a trip to Boston and Philadelphia during the bicentennial year; they raised money to visit Washington, D.C., and New York City. Backpackers have hiked the Appalachians, the Rockies, and many places in between. The type of intensive depends on the interests and creativity of the people involved. Some trips may be conceived by teachers, others are dreamed up by students. In some cases, parents have planned and taken trips with student groups.

An intensive is usually geared to specific learning activities. The group that visited the Navajo reservation had very specific goals in the areas of sociology and psychology and had opportunities for experiences in teaching. The Florida group studied marine biology and visited historic landmarks of the Civil War throughout the South. They also studied the Cuban culture in Miami. Travelers to Washington, D.C., went with history and government education goals in mind. Those who visited New York City took advantage of cultural offerings.

Whatever kind of trip you or your group has in mind, there are some things to keep in mind when planning an intensive. Finances, of course, seem imposing. How can teachers and students afford to take these trips? Be creative about accommodations. There are many kinds of inexpensive or free places to stay while traveling. Students have stayed in the basements of churches, in college dormitories, and in tents. Often housing can be arranged with students from high schools in the area you wish to visit. Allow plenty of time to plan your trip in order to check out all the possibilities.

Transportation presents another challenge to your ingenuity. It may involve putting some miles on your own automobile. If you're lucky, you may be able to find a van or station wagon to rent at a reasonable rate, or perhaps there is a school vehicle that could be borrowed. In some cases, parents have lent cars for cross-country trips. Perhaps there is a benevolent car dealer in your community who would lend you a car with the name of his dealership on the side. Since intensives seem to work best with smaller groups of students, usually one vehicle — station wagon or van — is sufficient for transportation. Although it is more expensive than driving, public transportation (train or bus) might be preferable in some circumstances. Sometimes special "See America" deals are available from bus companies. Students whose parents work for railroads can usually travel free, and sometimes parents can arrange special travel rates through their employers that are not available to the general public.

Fund raising plays a crucial part in a successful intensive. Ingenuity and a willingness to work are two qualities necessary to start the dollars rolling in. Learning Unlimited students have had the traditional bake sales, car washes, rummage sales, and dances. They have raffled off records, backpacks, and gasoline (donated by generous business people). Some have done odd jobs and babysitting; others have sold crafts and plants in spaces donated by local merchants. Bike-a-thons and walk-a-thons have brought in some money. Outside funding is occasionally available. For example, the National Endowment of the Humanities offers youth

grants up to $5,000 for some projects to people under 25. With determination, stick-to-itiveness, and plenty of time, the necessary money can be earned.

Many of the advantages of long distance traveling are obvious; students go beyond their backyards and see things that enrich them academically and intellectually. They gain a better understanding of the wide variety of lifestyles open to them as adults. Students often return home saying that although the sights were wonderful and the trip exciting, they grew most from learning how to get along with the group they lived closely with during the trip. Students' interpersonal skills are tested in a group living situation. They learn to deal with annoying habits of their fellow travelers as well as, in some cases, bona fide medical and emotional emergencies. The group experience often serves to help a student gain a better understanding of himself and how he appears to other people. It is common for students who take these long distance intensives together to begin to build the basis for what will become deep friendships. The sheer logistics of spending so much time planning and experiencing their adventure together creates a long-lasting camaraderie.

So, from extended trips, students are enriched both culturally and intellectually. They benefit from the unique experience of group living and group solidarity. They feel a sense of accomplishment if they plan and work to earn money for the trip. Their world widens and they gain new perspectives on the human condition. What about the teacher? Is the amount of work, responsibility, and headaches involved with overseeing a lot of little details worth it? In most cases, yes, especially when students share the responsibilities. Adults are enriched by travel too. And in addition to the customary benefits of any kind of travel, teachers have a unique opportunity to go beyond the traditional teacher-student roles toward a new kind of relationship in which each participant in the intensive is a learner and the world is the teacher. Teachers come to know students better and begin to understand some of the reasons behind their behavior and their attitudes towards school and learning. Students are forced to see their teachers as human beings instead of as authority figures.

Intensives are probably the most difficult community-based learning experience to arrange, but they often provide the most spectacular rewards. The following excerpt from one student's journal illustrates one reward that made all of the tedious preparations more than worthwhile:

> Our week in the woods made me feel very peaceful inside. For the first time ever I felt like I belonged to a

group, and when Friday came I wished I didn't have to go home.

Group Service Projects

There are probably few of us who have not contributed at least one can of food at Thanksgiving or Christmas to a needy family; or if you managed to avoid that experience, perhaps you got a little pin for your contribution to the Heart Fund. And that is about the extent of most high schools' service to the community. Occasionally students collect glass and newspaper to recycle. They go on bike-a-thons and walk-a-thons to raise money for charities. Some collect books for prisons, hospitals, or inner-city school libraries. Now and then cleanup crews or "crud caravans" are organized to beautify decaying neighborhoods. Not discounting the positive effects of these kinds of projects, they are notable for their lack of human contact. A student can easily dump some newspapers in a bin outside the school entrance or clean out his closet at home to find old books or clothing he has outgrown. Even walking or biking for charity is somewhat impersonal. Students are in school for most of the day; some spend as many as two full hours a day in study halls where they often gaze out of a window or doodle aimlessly in their notebooks, wasting a tremendous potential for service and growth. Enterprising teachers and students can think of any number of community service projects to enrich the high school curriculum. They run the gamut from serving as a volunteer guide on weekends or after school at a local museum to serving as a page in the state senate. Along these lines, students have coordinated fund raising drives for charities, manning booths and keeping the books. They have worked in nursing homes, hospitals, and schools as aides to professionals. Some have spent the night at the repertory theater, pulling down sets and creating new ones to be ready in time for the next opening night. One group even role-played the "casualties" for a local hospital's annual civil defense test of its emergency facilities.

Of primary importance to the teacher coordinating community service projects is their worth, both as academic and affective experiences for students. Students should be encouraged to offer volunteer service to their community and, whenever possible, plan their learning experiences to benefit others as well as themselves. Students can accomplish a great deal on an individual basis, but occasionally students who are unsure of themselves or unable to arrange transportation to get into the community may benefit from some group service projects.

Parents can often help teachers and students see some of the possibilities available and are willing to help students get involved. When parents themselves are involved in volunteer service projects, a perceptive teacher can match their interests and needs with those of students. In one case, a mother involved with senior citizens volunteered to take a small group of students to a local nursing home on a weekly basis. The students, all of whom were taking a course in sociology, gained important insights into the problems facing the elderly. They also provided companionship to the patients and aid to the staff. In several instances, the young people struck up friendships with the elderly inhabitants of the home and continued to visit the home after the official experience had ended. Some students taught crafts and played chess and checkers. Others learned needlepoint and quilting and heard a wealth of stories about "how it used to be" from the nursing home residents.

Community Action Projects

Community service and community action may seem synonymous, but in fact, they are not. Few would argue against students doing volunteer work for a variety of agencies and institutions. Adults smile proudly as their teenagers organize clean-up projects, and they gladly send cans of food to school for the Thanksgiving food drive. Some pay a dollar or more per mile for walk-a-thons and drop their change into the can with an approving nod when students approach them on the sidewalk for the March of Dimes. But let students start interfering with the corporate structure, or demanding that local industries clean up the air, or investigating property deeds at the court house to determine exactly who does own the slum housing in their neighborhoods, then smiles can turn to snarls rather quickly. Community service implies serving the defined needs of people in the community, but community action implies changing things. Community action makes many adults very nervous. One type of student community action project deals with consumerism. With the world growing more and more complicated and costs of nearly everything skyrocketing, students need to learn practical skills related to their purchasing power. Joe Nathan, a former teacher at the St. Paul Open School in St. Paul, Minnesota, offered a class called "Protect Your Rights and Money". Its practical approach did much to help students gain practical consumer skills. With the help of Nathan, students in the class organized a community action service to which citizens of St. Paul

may call or write in about their consumer problems. Each case the class takes on is assigned to a small group of students. Their usual procedure for dealing with the problems follows:

Procedure	Example
Investigate	A person bought a car that did not have the radio promised by the car dealer.
Upon receiving all needed information, set goals for the problem solving	Students write to ask for the contract.
Discuss possible strategies	Upon receiving the contract, they discuss possible ways of handling the situation.
Choose Strategy	They decide to call the car dealer. They role play the telephone conversation.
Do it!	They call the manager of the dealership. The manager agrees to install the radio.
Evaluate	Students review goals and decide if they were met, or if a different strategy might have been more effective.
Share with others	Students in the group report to the whole class. (In a more involved problem, the class might be consulted for strategy and follow-up)

A recent survey found that the class of students, ranging in age from 12 to 18, has handled 54 problems with 80% success in resolving them. They have found businesses very cooperative, while bureaucracies usually pose more red tape problems. The students have also learned that the consumer can be *wrong*; that it is very important to get all the facts.

Community action class not only has the potential of combining several academic areas (business, economics, home economics, psychology, and English, to name a few) and providing different kinds of practical experiences for students, but it also could be very easily adapted to a traditional school setting. The Open School

students had a booth on the skyway in downtown St. Paul to disseminate information about their service. They have also had publicity through feature stories in newspapers.

Nathan offers pointers to keep in mind when undertaking community action projects:

1. If the project has the potential of creating a controversy, be sure that your school administrators are aware of what you are doing so they may anticipate any repercussions. They should be familiar with your goals and understand that the students will pursue a number of options in trying to solve the problem or resolve the issue.
2. Students need to learn to think through the consequences of the investigations they are undertaking. They may need some direction in assessing the political realities of "picking your enemies." (It is not a good idea to try to put the company funding your program out of business!)
3. Teachers cannot lead students to do things — their decisions and direction must come from their own thorough exploration.
4. Political naiveté can be very destructive. Beware!

Student Publications and Foxfire Projects

As a way to motivate students who were turned off to learning, Eliot Wigginton, a young teacher in a small, rural community in Georgia's Appalachian mountains, assigned his English and journalism students to interview, photograph, and write about the people in their neighborhood. Excited about what they were learning, students agreed that publishing a magazine would be a great idea, and *Foxfire* was born. The magazine grew into a book and soon received national attention. The Foxfire project in Rabun Gap, Georgia, has now published four best sellers. The program provides a model for involving students in a variety of community-based activities, and an increasing number of schools across the country are adapting it to the unique population and customs of their own communities. Students in Kennebunkport, Maine, publish *Salt*, a magazine of interviews with farmers, fishermen, and foresters; Washington, D.C., students created *Cityscape*, which describes the diverse neighborhoods of the nation's capital; and Navajo Indian students in Arizona produced *Tsa' Aszi!*, a magazine that records traditional Navajo customs and crafts.

The Foxfire model adapts well to nearly any kind of community because it has at its base a universal respect for local people and their traditions, combined with a healthy curiosity about the immediate world that surrounds us. Foxfire-type projects can be based on oral history of the local community or on almost any kind of special interest. If you're interested in railroads, flying, photography, automobiles, CBs, weaving, or printing, you probably have a potential Foxfire project.

Learning Unlimited students who read Studs Terkel's *Working* in an English seminar decided to publish a magazine called *On the Job*, which contained interviews and photographs of Indianapolis citizens at work. Students chose to interview people for a variety of reasons: some interviewed people in careers the students were considering pursuing themselves; others interviewed people in careers the students considered glamorous; some students were intrigued by people like the newspaper vendors on the corner, shoe shine men at the bus station, or taxi drivers.

In his book, *Moments*, Eliot Wigginton stresses that the most crucial aspect of the program is the Foxfire process; the publication is a fortunate by-product. One major strength of a Foxfire project is that it provides a place for every kind of student, and each contributes equally to the program's ultimate success. Writers, readers, dreamers, organizers, photographers, science buffs, people who like to fiddle with machines — they all have a place in Foxfire. Reese Cleghorn described Foxfire for *Atlanta Magazine*, where he articulated as well as anyone the real purpose and benefits of this kind of program:

> *Foxfire*, a delight to read, is certain evidence that literary talent and sensitive interest can flower among the very young. But there is more. It is possible to come of age in our consumers' melting pot without much sensitivity to any values much better than those conveyed through the incessant packaging and selling of products. It seems to me that the principal virtue of the Rabun Gap students' undertaking is not that it improves their literary skills, or even that it helps preserve a disappearing heritage in the mountains, but that it is making them look at people whose lives run across the grain of the society that surrounds them today, but whose worth and integrity as people are clear. It may be that Harley Carpenter's knowledge of weaving oak splints is only a curiosity. But the students, I think, are looking past the curiosity to Harley Carpenter himself, and except for the literary endeavor, they would not be looking at all. Their poetry suggests, certainly, that they are looking past the skills and customs, the crow

> calls and oak 'splits' into the deeper bogs and brighter glades of nature and life. Why shouldn't that happen in high schools?

Some basic skills and equipment are necessary in order for students to gain the maximum benefit from a Foxfire-type program. The foundation of all Foxfire activities is the interview. To produce clear, alive articles, students need to know how to interview people effectively. A good interviewer always does some background work on his subject before going to meet him. By having some preliminary understanding of a person's special interests, the student will have a better idea of the kinds of things he can learn from him. To prevent misunderstandings, it is important for the student to explain how he plans to use the material gleaned from the interview. If publication is intended, he may ask the person to sign a simple release form granting permission to use the material for educational or historical purposes. When interviewing a friend or relative, the interviewer should pretend he is a stranger. He should ask questions even if he thinks he knows the answers; using this method, the interviewer often finds out a lot more than he expected. Foxfire students recommend a cassette recorder for interviews, but if one is not available, a simple pad and pencil will do.

Before going out to do the first interview, students should sharpen their note-taking skills by listening to a radio or television show or a class lecture. Parents or friends may volunteer to be interviewed for a test run. If a student interviewer uses a cassette recorder, he should be familiar with the machine's operation before beginning his interviews. Tapes or notes should be transcribed or typed right after the interview, because the interviewer can remember better the mood of the conversation, the facial expressions and gestures of the interviewee, and other small details that can make the article come alive. After transcription, the student may edit the interview, taking care to punctuate and paragraph correctly and to eliminate irrelevant information.

Illustrations greatly enrich the written interviews. For photographs, a single-lens reflex camera is most effective, but a Polaroid or Instamatic will suffice, depending on how the photographs will be used. Regardless of the kind of camera used, students should attempt to take pictures that tell a story about their subjects. Students who develop an interest in photography through Foxfire activities may want to set up a darkroom for developing film and making prints to be used in the publication. Students with artistic talent may want to go along on an interview to make rough sketches and then fill in details later.

In addition to the articles that result from interviews, creative writing is another possible activity in a Foxfire-type project. Students subconsciously internalize facts and impressions from having touched the lives of others that emerge in some new form in their short stories and poetry.

Teachers in a traditional school can adapt the Foxfire idea to their classrooms. Regardless of where you teach, keep your eyes and ears open, ask lots of questions, and do some background reading on the area to come up with an idea that might be fun to explore. Librarians, newspaper reporters, museum personnel, and state and local historical societies may be helpful in your search for intriguing possibilities.

Once you and your students decide what you want to do, there are a number of how-to books available to help you get the project off the ground (See bibliography). Also, there may be people involved in a Foxfire program in a nearby school who might be willing to help you out. Write to your state department of education for information on programs or inquire at local schools. A few days observation of a working Foxfire project will provide much practical information and will also stimulate you to get your own started! Some states have advisory organizations for Foxfire projects. In Vermont, Foxfire/Vermont (Brattleboro, VT 05301) helps students and teachers set up programs. Cornell University (Itaca, NY) and the State Extension Service encourage Foxfire projects in New York by providing suggestions and guidance. IDEAS (1785 Massachusetts Ave, N.W., Washington, DC 20036) is a national organization assisting institutions that desire to create programs modeled on Foxfire. In a quarterly bulletin, *Exchange*, published by IDEAS, Foxfire program participants from around the country share information and advice from their experiences.

Foxfire activities have produced a variety of learning products. The most famous are the *Foxfire* books and magazines from the Rabun Gap high school in Georgia, but students are devising other innovative uses for the rich information they gather in their own communities. Some have created libraries of oral histories with the tapes of the people they have interviewed, some are experimenting with selling recordings which are actually oral magazines. Others contribute valuable research to government agencies or historical societies in their states. Recently *Cityscape* students in Washington, D.C., created a slide/tape show about Pennsylvania Avenue for the city information center. Their presentation won them a grant for continuation of the project. The Foxfire model is a good one to begin with, but don't let it inhibit your search for possibilities unique to your own surroundings. Use your imagination!

Walkabout Model

Almost all societies have rites of passage that mark the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Aborigine tribesmen in Australia send their sons on a Walkabout, a survival exercise in the wilderness, leaving them alone for half a year to grapple with the natural environment. When they return, the tribe welcomes them as adults. In our society, we have no such dramatic experience as a demarcation point between adolescence and adulthood. However, our students are sent from a protective school environment to conquer a different kind of wilderness. Plunged into a technological and constantly changing world, young people must learn to survive. Success in this endeavor in our society means social acceptance and material wealth; failure, for many, means a life of frustration and poverty.

Searching for answers to problems plaguing today's schools, educators are beginning to question the validity of the traditional high school experience as an effective preparation for adulthood and are looking to the aborigine custom of the Walkabout as an inspiration for learning experiences that will prepare high school students better for the adult world.

The Walkabout model was conceived by Maurice Gibbons of Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada, and described in *Phi Delta Kappan* (May, 1974). In his article, Gibbons stated the basic principles of a modern Walkabout as personal challenge, individual and group decision making, self direction in the pursuit of goals, real world significance in an activity, and community involvement at all stages of preparation and conclusion. These principles might be incorporated into the curriculum in a variety of ways, but in each case, the curriculum must focus on the personal development of students. Walkabout activities could be extracurricular or they might be one element in the curriculum, such as a course for credit that would include planning, consultation, and training time. A Walkabout could form the core of the senior year with all teaching activity geared to preparing for the students' real world experiences. Ideally, the Walkabout would be a concept around which a whole new curriculum is designed.

Since Gibbons's article appeared in May, 1974, a number of schools across the United States and Canada have been experimenting with the Walkabout concept for high school students. One midwestern high school offers a class called "Walkabout" to seniors, challenging them to create experiences in five areas: adventure, creativity, logical inquiry, service, and practical skills. For successfully creating and completing the challenges, the students earn two-and-a-half elective credits. As a prerequisite to the

course, the staff offers an orientation minicourse that explores a variety of educational philosophies and defines the Walkabout concept in particular, helps students prepare challenges relevant to their life goals and aspirations, offers practical suggestions on how to raise and manage money necessary for the challenges students undertake, and identifies community resources. In addition, the course provides a forum for the questions of students and parents and builds a strong communication base among the Walkabout students that becomes crucial for morale in the later stages of the students' involvement in the program. Students are discouraged from taking a heavy load of classes in the traditional program during the semester they pursue their Walkabout challenges since they need as much freedom and flexibility as possible to get the most out of their real world experiences.

Each student's Walkabout curriculum is uniquely his own. He creates his five challenges based on his personal interests, goals, and abilities. He meets biweekly with a contact person at the school to review his progress and solidify goals to be completed in the near future. He makes contracts with the community resource people he works with and, at the end of the experience, is evaluated by those people as part of his total grade. He keeps a daily journal in which he records not only his experiences, but his reactions to them. The journal provides an accountability record of actual time spent on Walkabout-related activities. At the end of the semester, students, parents, teachers, and community resource people gather for a sharing session, where Walkabout students present some of their accomplishments and discuss the growth and learning that has resulted from their Walkabout.

A program evaluation by students revealed overall positive feelings about the kinds of experiences offered by Walkabout. Some of the common complaints, or constructive criticisms were: it was difficult to get everything done in the time allotted; the financial aspect was or could be restrictive (many students needed money to complete some of the projects they designed for themselves or they found that they had to quit their part-time jobs or limit drastically the number of hours they worked in order to fulfill Walkabout requirements); it was too easy to lie about accomplishments; and regular classes at the school made it difficult to schedule community activities. Some also expressed concern that the "image" of the Walkabout course was bad; they felt that people in the school and community should be better informed about the goals and objectives of the class.

Learning Unlimited students utilize the Walkabout concept, but in a different format. In this program, all students taking classes in the program are expected to use the community for part

of their academic credit. Almost every student has at least one Walkabout-type experience a year as real world experiences are crucial to the philosophy of the program. In literally pushing kids out of the school and into the community to learn what they need to know, the staff sends them on a kind of modern-day Walkabout. In addition to arranging community-based activities in Indianapolis and surrounding areas, students are encouraged to create their own Walkabout challenges that will take them even farther from the protective confines of school and home. One student interested in a career in radio or television traveled alone to Chicago where he stayed for a week to attend the National Broadcasters Convention; another student took six weeks of his summer vacation to recreate the famous conservationist John Muir's walk from Indiana to Florida. Anxious to see the "wild west," one senior bought an AmTrak student pass and spent three weeks traveling alone throughout California and the Southwestern states. In each case, students were able to work on contract objectives for the classes they were taking around the challenges they had created for themselves.

Gary Phillips, director of Learning Unlimited at North Central High School, identifies the following elements as crucial to creating a Walkabout challenge:

1. Choice. Students are required to make decisions based on identified options. This requires prior assessment of consequences and prioritizing of the options.
2. Commitment. Students must make commitments in writing by means of a negotiated learning contract. This commitment is made to teachers and parents and must be fulfilled according to the timetable. Nonfulfillment of commitments has consequences that can also result in valuable learning experiences. Commitments promote responsibility by transferring ownership for one's academic progress from teacher to student.
3. Risk. Living the self-actualized life or perhaps any other of Maslow's lives implies some risk. Students must be willing and feel safe to take risks. Risks include the potential for failure or success.
4. Transfer of Ownership. Choice, commitment, and risk all imply a transfer of ownership to students. Students own their successes and, therefore, tend to credit themselves rather than the program, teachers, or others. Students also tend to accept ownership for

their own failures. Failure can be valuable when it is owned and processed. As with success, blame for failure is owned by students rather than projected to school, program, teachers, parents, and others.

5. Failure *is* Valuable. A different view of failure is required. James McElhinney, professor at Ball State University and external evaluator of Learning Unlimited, states, "Schools ought to be a place where kids can feel free to fail, and from that failure, find support and assistance in making that failure into a valuable learning experience.
6. Effort. Challenge requires a degree of effort. Students must extend themselves beyond normal requirements. This effort may well differ with each student. Even with failure, the effort exerted may not always be rewarded with commodity return (grades, credit, certification), but the experience itself becomes the essence of the reward.
7. Benefit of Serendipity. Challenge activities are all planned and goals and objectives are written in anticipation of predictable learner outcomes. However, one advantage of challenge education is that certain unanticipated benefits usually result that could not have been predicted by anyone. This phenomenon we call "serendipity" and we gladly embrace it as another of life's happy accidents. The differing perception of each individual determines this phenomenon.
8. Action. Challenge implies action; few challenges are passive in nature. Challenge implies active participation in some facet of one's life. Action also includes all the previous elements of choice, commitment, risk, transfer of ownership, failure, and effort.
9. Creative Tension. There is always a quality of dissonance and disequilibrium that accompanies growth. We call this essential stage of growth creative tension. As students begin to seek answers, they become creative in devising new solutions to the dilemma of their own existence.
10. Organization and Structure. Challenge education is much more highly structured than traditional learning programs. It requires diagnosis, collaboration, prescription, prediction, enabling activities, identification of resources, linking participation, and evaluation of experiences. To neglect this structure is to

invite program chaos and aimless activity on the part of students.

11. Group Interaction and Action. Most, if not all, challenges are carried out in conjunction with others. These others may be peer group members or adults in the working world. While students often choose to participate as individuals in challenge activities, these activities always carry them into group interaction.
12. Accountability. It is inevitable that we must all live by our decisions and become accountable for our behavior. This is especially true of challenge activities. Students must prove the value of their experience to the satisfaction of a group of "experts" as to the quality and quantity of the experience.

Exchanges

In an exchange a student becomes part of a family away from familiar surroundings with the goal of gaining a deeper insight into a different way of life. A well-tested idea, the exchange gives a student the chance to immerse himself totally in a divergent culture. Exchange programs have been utilized with great success by foreign language students and teachers. Many larger high schools are fortunate enough to have at least one foreign exchange student each year, and a wide variety of opportunities for foreign study are open to American high school and college students.

Student exchanges can also be rewarding experiences within the boundaries of one's own country — even within the boundaries of one's own state or city. Learning Unlimited sponsors an exchange with the Rough Rock Demonstration School on the Navajo Indian Reservation at Rough Rock, Arizona. Indianapolis students have spent up to six weeks living in dormitories with Navajo students and attending the reservation high school. Navajo teen-agers have lived in the homes of Indiana families for a month, attending North Central High School. Students of each culture reported a tremendous amount of growth from the experience, stating that the loneliness, confusion, and in some cases, culture shock they experienced were ultimately well worth the pain.

On a field trip to another alternative school, one Learning Unlimited student struck up a friendship that resulted in a short exchange between their schools. The one student, a life-long city dweller, spent some time with his new friend who lived in a small town in Indiana. Amazed at the differing ways of life in two places

so close together on the map, he re-evaluated his own life with new eyes.

Various kinds of exchanges can be arranged, ranging from an extended visit to a foreign country to a short exposure to a neighborhood radically different within your own city. Crucial to the success of any exchange is the idea of immersing oneself in a new culture. An exchange is not synonymous with a vacation; in fact, it is when one has seen all the sights and become accustomed to those elements of a culture that differ appreciably from one's own that the real benefits of an exchange begin. Though short exchanges may be fun and educational, the longer an exchange experience, the better. For the maximum reward, the novelty for the exchange student must wear off and his "family" should fall back into its own normal daily routines.

4. Roadblocks — Anticipating Some Problems

Photo by Jay Hill

A botany student gains practical experience working in a greenhouse.

Roadblocks or detours steal precious time from travel, making it, in some cases circuitous, in others actually backward moving. Some roadblocks are unavoidable, others may be anticipated by good map reading, a conversation with an experienced traveler, or a telephone call to Triple A. A traveler who has experienced the frustration of ending up back where he started, after assuming he was well on his way and going in the right direction, will understand the benefit of anticipating these roadblocks and, whenever possible, adapting his travel plans to avoid them.

In planning community-based learning experiences, one should be prepared for some of the problems. While the rationale is well thought out and good examples abound, organizing quality community-based experiences for your students takes a great deal of careful preparation.

Confusion Concerning Alternative Education

A general misconception about alternative education exists in the minds of many citizens. Students, parents, teachers, and school administrators are particularly responsible for perpetuating the stereotypes that picture alternative programs as "dumping grounds" for students unable to survive in a traditional school setting. They complain that alternative schools provide a way to get through high school with little or no work. While many alternatives have been created for students who have floundered hopelessly in the classroom, an equal number have been created for students who have adapted beautifully to school but are looking for something more.

In their book *Alternatives in Education*, Robert Barr, Vernon

Smith, and Daniel Burke of Indiana University state:

> There is no standard definition for an alternative public school. One community's alternative school might be a standard school in another community. For example, an open school to which all the children in a neighborhood are assigned is not an alternative. An open school that is available by choice is an alternative school.
>
> In other words, while no definition can encompass all alternative public schools, three criteria for determining whether a school is an alternative school are choice, difference, and representative enrollment.
>
> Alternatives must involve choice. An alternative does not exist unless those it serves have a chance to reject it. Many fine innovative schools and programs are within public school systems, but unless the clientele that they serve have chosen that program rather than another one, they are not alternatives. In addition, the school must be different from the standard school in the community, and the enrollment usually should reflect the composition of the entire community, not a portion of it.

Delores Paskal and William Miller have suggested 12 characteristics of alternative public schools in their article in *Educational Leadership* (October, 1975):

1. Voluntary. An essential element in any viable alternative program is the opportunity, the option, of choosing not to participate.
2. Stress Involvement. Students, parents, faculty, community, and administrators are involved in planning, operating, and evaluating the program in one way or another.
3. Locally Developed. Each program is "home grown," reflecting the needs, interests, resources, and facilities in the area or district.
4. Rearrange Resources. An optional alternative program uses its resources differently from the regular or conventional program. Most function at or near the same funding level as the regular program, once start-up costs are met.
5. Well-Defined Goals. Optional alternative programs go through a planning and development process that evokes clearly stated purposes and objectives.
6. Representative Enrollment. Rather than serving only a selected target group of students with special needs, optional alternative programs increasingly

seek to attract diverse and representative enrollments.

7. Maintain Relationships with the System. Consistent with the belief that reform of the present monolithic school system is needed, alternatives work to build a close relationship with the "parent" school or school system using its resources, exchanging ideas, communicating successes and failures, and trying to involve faculty, students, and parents from the "regular" program.
8. Depart Significantly. By definition, an alternative program is a significant departure from the existing program.
9. Teach Basic Skills. Optional learning programs offer basic subjects, but in personal and responsive ways. Attention to skills development and subject matter often occurs within a supportive web of goal setting, building on successes and strengths, supportive peer groups, and multidisciplinary approaches.
10. Develop Talents and Interests. Optional programs help students develop a sense of identity and personal effectiveness.
11. Personalize Student Learning. Optional programs put people — their interests, needs, and how they learn — at the center of things. Students are the focus for organizing the educational program.
12. Meet Requirements. Since the option is the student's basic program, it makes arrangements to meet state and local district requirements for accreditation, attendance, or graduation common in the school district or area.

Alternative education includes everything from the highly structured, "back-to-basics" programs to the free schools that have few or no basic requirements for students. Whether you teach or learn in a school that sticks to reading, writing, and arithmetic or one in which students are free to learn or not to learn according to their own notions or perceived needs, you are involved in an educational alternative. Alternatives allow for the wide variety of teaching and learning that can occur both inside and outside the walls of a school building. Individually Guided Education (IGE) and the open classroom are common alternatives at the elementary level. At the secondary level, people are involved in high schools with remedial, religious, artistic, or vocational emphases.

Alternative education is not new, just recently labeled. The

parochial school is an alternative educational system utilized by millions of Americans since the beginnings of our nation. Most large school systems have dropout prevention programs and special education programs for those students with special needs. A number of school systems are beginning to offer a variety of alternatives within the district. At Quincy, Illinois, the single high school in the town houses a number of different alternative "mini-schools," including a traditional school, vocational school, school of fine arts, and school without walls. Each student chooses the school that best fits his needs and interests. Another leader in system-wide alternatives is Grand Rapids, Michigan. At present, 13 alternatives at the secondary level, including a school without walls, two dropout prevention centers, a school for unwed mothers, an independent study program, an enrichment school, and a center for world studies are all available to Grand Rapids students.

In some cases, the establishment of an alternative school that enrolls only students who choose to attend has helped to solve integration problems, acting like a magnet to attract students of differing ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds who have a common interest or need. Such institutions are frequently called magnet schools. For example, the Louisville, Kentucky, Brown School staff carefully constructs a racial and socioeconomic balance when admitting applicants to its school.

In a situation in which people express disapproval of "radical" teaching techniques, it might be a good idea not to label your new teaching or learning experiences in the community as alternative education at the outset. Wait until you are confident of your acceptance and success. People involved in education are, for the most part, highly resistant to change, especially change that demands its own title and definition. However, most competent teachers have been providing alternatives for years. They just called it good teaching! A group of driver training teachers, well known in their system for their conservative approach to education and their resistance to alternative teaching techniques, were ordered by the state department to add some 30 hours to their driver education curriculum. Feeling confident that they already provided adequate driving and classroom instruction, they compiled a list of practical skills related to driving that students could learn on their own. Ranging from changing a tire or the points and spark plugs to planning a motoring vacation, the skills were a required part of the curriculum. Students had to demonstrate competence in a specific number of them, but were given the option to choose those they felt would benefit them most. To receive credit, students had to have a parent or other qualified person sign a form which validated their

learning. Proud of their design since it fulfilled state requirements while at the same time providing students with valuable practical skills, one of the driver education instructors described the course in detail in the teacher's lounge one day.

"I really like that idea," responded one of the staff members of the school's controversial alternative program sincerely. "I'm glad to see so many more people offering alternatives."

In the ensuing discussion, the driver education teacher was amazed to discover that he and his colleagues had unwittingly developed a kind of alternative driver education program and that the school's alternative program had been including these kinds of practical skills in their curriculum for some years.

It takes time to get around the roadblock created by misinformation and wrong impressions. Breaking down the barriers on a one-to-one basis seems to have the best and most long-lasting results, though certainly a comprehensive program of educating the public — students, teachers, and administrators included — is helpful in dispelling the myths and misunderstandings surrounding alternative education. Be patient. Take time to explain what you are doing to people who seem even the tiniest bit interested. Whenever you get the chance, accept invitations to speak publicly about your projects. Avoid jargon. Explain your new ideas in language that can be understood by anyone. Be broad-minded. Regardless of your own educational philosophy, accept the fact that others may disagree. Respect their beliefs, though you may disagree with them. Your experiments and philosophies will seem less threatening if people feel sure that you are not going to force them to change but only want them to understand your ideas and enthusiasm.

Watering Down Academic Standards

A common assumption about community-based alternative programs is that they water down the curriculum, that students' practical and enrichment activities take away too much precious time from the basics. While willing to admit that these activities may be beneficial to students, some critics insist on seeing them in terms of a scale: when you add weight on one side, the other side is out of balance. To answer this kind of argument, it is necessary to re-evaluate the traditional curriculum of the high school, including the redefining of roles of teachers and students. Are lectures and tests on *The Scarlet Letter* or the dates and battles of all the wars ever fought better learning experiences than reading and re-

searching a local author or visiting a series of museums and battlegrounds? If teachers want to utilize community-based experiences, they must be willing to admit that the one-hour-a-day, five-days-a-week approach to learning may not always be the most effective. They may have to discard some of those lesson plans they have so diligently prepared during the last five, 10 or 20 years and begin to look at specific needs of specific students.Students must recognize that learning cannot always be measured by an A,B, C,D, or F grade. In a good community-based learning program, students learn all the "basics" covered in a more traditional program. However, they learn them in different ways, with less emphasis on superfluous information and more emphasis on practical application. They take their basic book learning outside the school, augment it with a variety of experiences in the community, and emerge with a broader view of a subject area that is more relevant to their lives.

Defining New Roles for Teachers

In alternative programs, teachers take on new roles. The nature of many of these new programs demand that teachers become not only instructors and test-givers, but facilitators, coordinators, counselors, administrators, and friends. It is difficult for some administrators to deal with teachers' new roles when they differ from those of the traditional classroom teacher. Few school systems include professional positions with descriptions that allow for personnel in anything but an instructional capacity. One administrator wrote to a certified employee with a master's degree in alternative education, "We have appreciated your contribution to the alternative program as a 'teacher's aide' and even though you see yourself as overqualified for that position, unfortunately that is the only position we have available . . . Nor would we create an [administrative aide] position."

Most community-based programs need a staff person to coordinate students' activities away from school, provide advice to cooperating agencies and businesses in the community, and continually update resource information. A job of this description is demanding, generally requiring a number of professional and organizational skills which do not fall neatly under the heading of teacher's aide, administrator, secretary, or teacher. Justifying this type of position presents a roadblock that is difficult to get around. One administrative solution is to maintain a small teaching load in addition to your community-related responsibilities, thus pre-

serving your status as a full-fledged "teacher." Or you can simply grin and bear your teacher's aide status, taking in stride not only your healthy pay cut, but other little indignities. Enlisting the support of your local teacher's union or association in recognizing the professional status of your position is good strategy, but recognize even it is usually wary of any changes in the status or job description of teachers.

If you are fortunate enough to be hired as a teacher in a community-based program, be prepared to take on new roles. Realize the roles you take on will depend on the people you work with and will change from time to time. Be flexible; be ready and willing to allow for the needs and capabilities of each person with whom you associate. When people make a sincere effort to personalize teaching and learning, new roles come easily and fit comfortably.

Measuring the Worth of Community-Based Learning

What is a community-based learning experience worth? Can we measure it in terms of a grade or by assigning it a point value? Does it fall under the category of "extra credit" and is it used as a bonus when it comes time to compute a grade? Should we decide it's worth by adding up hours, by testing, or through an interview? Should the teacher, the resource person, or the student assess its value? How can we judge the ultimate worth of a student's experience when we consider all the cognitive and affective influences community-based education can provide?

There is no simple answer to the multitude of questions that arise when approaching this issue of evaluation. Teachers and students have tried a variety of methods for placing a value on community-based learning. The one you choose will have to be unique to your own situation, taking into consideration the policies and politics of the system in which you work. If grades are unavoidable, perhaps you might experiment with a point breakdown based on the number of hours worked combined with the evaluation of the community resource person when deciding on a student's grade. When letter grades are not required, an extensive written narrative based on the evaluations of the experience by the teacher, resource person, and student can be quite informative. Students are probably best qualified to judge the affective benefits of their own experience even though such benefits may not always be immediately evident.

In learning to evaluate these kinds of experiences, one must dispell the notion that it is possible somehow to compute a numerical value for them. One cannot get a 97% grade on a community experience as one can on a history test. Such a grade would be meaningless and totally inadequate as an evaluation. One cannot set a numerical value on life's learning experiences. Exactly how much will a postgraduate course benefit your professional career? What is the monetary value of a child lost to a reckless driver? Students gain considerable insight into evaluation through contemplating the positive and negative aspects of their community experiences. They must evaluate whether they learned what they set out to learn, whether they could have done more, or whether they truly had no control over the situation. Sometimes they must decide whether to terminate or complete an experience after considering carefully the ramifications of either decision.

Though we may devise careful systems of accounting for community-based experiences, we must ultimately face the fact that student participation in those experiences cannot be evaluated with traditional methods of grading. Do what you need to do. If you need to give a grade, figure out a way to do it fairly. But teachers should not forget that the real value of these experiences is often veiled, perhaps hidden in the student's subconscious. Someday in the future what the student learned during his community-based experiences might determine the course of life's many major decisions.

Working with Community Resource People

Most people who agree to help you in providing community-based learning experiences have been away from high school for a long time. To avoid misunderstandings, clarify for them the goals and objectives, both for the individual student and for the community-based program in which he is involved. Using contracts has been an effective method of insuring that all people involved understand their responsibilities.

Although it is impossible to predict exactly what a student will learn from a community-based learning experience, it helps to structure it with some guidelines for his time away from school. A student should not float into a newspaper office with the vague goal of "learning about the newspaper business." He and the people he is working with should know specifically what he would like to learn. Is he interested in sports writing, feature writing, or investigative reporting? Is he interested in the tech-

nical end of the operation: what goes on in the composing room; how a newspaper is put together? Would he like to have diverse experiences to give him a general idea of newspaper work, or would he rather work in depth on one aspect, perhaps being assigned to work with one person for the whole time? These points need to be clarified *before* the experience begins. Occasionally, community resource people unwittingly take advantage of their "free help" by assigning them chores like typing, filing, and answering the phone. These chores can certainly add to a student's understanding of the overall operation of a business if used in balance with some well-planned and challenging learning experiences.

If community resource people understand your program and its unique approach to education, it will make it much easier for them to work with the students who seek them out for help. Remembering that the time these people have available is limited, probably the most effective method of orienting them is with a *brief* handbook and phone calls before, during, and after the student's experience. The calls are important; not only do they help clear up questions before they become full scale problems, but they assure both the student and resource person that the school is concerned about the quality of the experience and the student's commitment to it.

Transcending the Experience

In a community-based program, it is easy for a student to become an "experience dilettante," a person who goes from one experience to another, dabbling first in law, then in horticulture, with no goal beyond the experience itself. In good community-based programs, students should learn to transcend their experiences, incorporating them into an overall pattern of growth. Even when poorly executed, internships, field trips, guest speakers, and other kinds of community learning provide diversion from the humdrum world of textbooks and exercises, but when students view their community experiences as pieces in a jigsaw puzzle — an integral part of a bigger picture — then they are likely to trigger the richest growth.

Although experiences undertaken simply for their own sake undoubtedly benefit students, in the school framework, field experiences work best when planned in conjunction with specific learning objectives. The student involved in an internship in the pioneer section of a museum will not learn enough about life of

that period to understand it unless he augments his field work with reading, research, and discussion. Combining traditional teaching and learning techniques with the more exciting community-based learning experiences gives a student a well-rounded understanding of the subject matter.

New Skills for a New Environment

Picture a typical classroom with 35 or 40 desks placed carefully in rows by some conscientious janitor, a gleaming floor, windows with tan shades at varying heights. A teacher's desk guards the front of the room, giving good vantage over all the student desks. A blackboard covers most of the wall space, one edge of it neatly lettered with the date, the teacher's name, and tomorrow's assignment — all surrounded by a thin chalk line and accompanied by the word *SAVE*. The standard metal wastebasket sits in one corner of the room; a bookshelf houses a variety of reference and textbooks; a podium perches on an extra table, just waiting to be lectured from. Locked cupboards preserve the bulk of books and supplies. And of course, the bulletin board: perhaps it has a seasonal display, perhaps a sampling of excellent student work; sometimes it extolls the virtues of things like reading, World War II, or binomial factoring.

The bell rings and students begin to filter in. The teacher rushes in from the teacher's lounge, carrying a stack of books and papers that he deposits on his desk. At the second bell, the teacher closes the door, glancing sternly at the almost-late student who rushes past him and slides, breathless, into her seat. Waiting just an instant for the buzz of conversation to abate, he addresses the class. "Open your books to page _____"; or "Take out a clean piece of paper and number from one to 25"; or "Turn in your assignments" might very well be his first words on any given day. Referring briefly to his lesson plan, the 55-minute class proceeds according to his direction.

Based on control rather than trust, the traditional high school environment does not encourage decision making. Aggressive behavior, except when competing with one's classmates for grades or in the sports arena, is not tolerated. Students' major decision is whether or not to study according to the teacher's direction or suffer the consequences of delving instead into areas that interest them. It stands to reason that a student moving from this traditional school atmosphere into a community-based program, which demands skills of the adult world, will encounter some difficult adjustments.

Students complain that it is hard to be responsible. Although they felt stifled in the traditional classroom, they sometimes long for the simplicity of life that goes along with following someone else's directions. Community-based education forces a student to analyze, organize, adapt, decide, prioritize, and evaluate; all of these are important to the final goal of becoming self-reliant.

Students who take on the responsibilities entailed in a community-based program must understand the commitment they make to themselves, their school, and the resource people who agree to help them. Forgotten appointments, slipshod work, and poor preparation are inexcusable. Students guilty of these habits not only are wasting resource people's time, but also give a bad impression of alternative education in general. Students in these new programs are highly visible; in many ways they are blazing the path for those who will follow. How they perform and how they relate to people in the community will directly affect the future of their program.

Some community-based programs have used a system in which all learning experiences that involve community resource people must be cleared through a central coordinator. This person is responsible for seeing that contracts are filled out and that both parties are clear about the nature of the experience. He also handles follow-up and keeps careful records of each student's experience in a central resource file. While this alleviates a number of problems common in community learning, it also removes a major responsibility from the student. As in a regular classroom, adults exercise their control over his experiences.

Floundering can have its strong points! In the process, students do eventually come to understand some of the responsibilities most people do not recognize until early adulthood. Ultimately, each person is responsible for his own actions; high school is as good a time as any to attempt to come to terms with this reality. Planning and executing their own community-based learning experiences — making phone calls, setting up interviews, arranging internships — can help high school students begin the long journey towards self-reliance.

Transportation

Transportation poses a serious problem in conducting community-based learning programs. Assuming that most students are not fortunate enough to have an automobile at their disposal at all times, just exactly how are students supposed to get to all of these exciting field experiences?

If your school is in a city, or even in a suburb with access to decent public transportation, problems may be minimal. A number of schools have made arrangements with metropolitan transit systems that have agreed to issue students special tokens or identification cards to help students navigate the city with ease.

Schools with little or no access to public transportation have had some measure of success organizing car pools and recruiting parent volunteers to get students to community learning sites. With enough advance notice, many school systems provide school bus service for field trips. One school arranged to have a school bus one day a week to take students downtown in the morning and pick them up at a specified location in the afternoon. Some alternative schools have vans that they use for transporting students to community learning experiences. In those cases, students who are unable to arrange their own transportation can file a trip request for a ride with the person responsible for scheduling the van several days ahead of time. The van driver creates a schedule from the requests he receives from students and staff.

Just believing that the transportation dilemma can be conquered is half the battle. Don't hesitate to explore any possibility; you'll be surprised at the number of people willing to help you out.

Legal Concerns of Community-Based Education

One reason teachers and administrators have been reluctant to endorse community-based learning is the fear of lawsuits. There is not much risk of negligence suits in herding students into classrooms, assigning them seats, and lecturing to them every day.

According to Gary Phillips, director of Learning Unlimited, there is usually no legal precedent, no board policy, and no handy commandment in the administrative handbook when experimenting with curricular innovation. Without clear-cut policy to guide you, bringing about curriculum change depends on a teacher's ability to make intelligent situational decisions. To help teachers make those kinds of decisions, Phillips has suggested the following points when planning and executing community-based learning experiences:

1. The teacher has a duty to students (and parents) to use reasonable means to minimize foreseeable risks. For example, permitting students to be un-

supervised while experimenting with dynamite or dangerous chemicals might be a breach of duty.

2. Courts often will balance the risk of an activity against its educational value. This permits some subjective value judgments for each activity. For example, on a recent trip to Washington, D.C., some students were robbed. While this is a foreseeable risk when taking a trip to the inner city, it is probably outweighed by the educational value of student activities while on that intensive experience (at least where the possibility of a mugging was minimized by adequate supervision).
3. To prove negligence, there must be a duty (which there is between teacher and student); there must be a breach of that legal duty, and the breach must be the legally recognized proximate cause of provable damage.
4. The legal test for teacher negligence is:
   a. Would a competent teacher foresee the hazard?
   b. Could a competent teacher prevent harm without destroying the educational value of the experience? (Admittedly, this is highly subjective.)
   c. Would a wise teacher undertake the activity at all? For example, teachers are not responsible for freak accidents that are not foreseeable or not preventable by reasonable means.
5. Schools are not accountable for everything that can and does happen to students during school hours. For example, recently in our program, students had raised popcorn in a rural setting as a part of a science project. In shelling the corn by hand, a kernel lodged in the ear of a student and had to be removed by surgery. The test for teacher negligence in number 4 above could be applied here. A teacher is not responsible for things he cannot foresee, nor for what he can foresee but cannot prevent through reasonable means (except, of course, for ultra-hazardous activities).
6. Informing parents of the activity does not constitute a waiver of teacher responsibility, but does put the parents on notice. The legal waiver of responsibility of a signed permission slip from parents is questionable, but its value is that parents are informed, which may deter them from initiating action or at

least weaken their position with the courts should they initiate action.

7. Community-based activities are generally valid through an "extended classroom" clause of the law.
8. Extracurricular programs carry an "implied risk" by their very nature. Since participation is voluntary on the part of both students and parents, parents assume a greater risk to student safety as a part of agreeing to program participation. For example, a student who joins the school football team assumes a greater risk to safety than if the same student joins the school choral group.
9. Two areas where schools (teachers) are subject to negligence suits are:
   a. Dangerous activities (making explosives, mountain climbing, skydiving, transportation);
   b. Activities done dangerously (trampoline jumping without spotters, use of alcohol or drugs during an activity, normal activity with inadequate supervision).
10. If teachers can foresee a risk or hazard, they should:
    a. Inform students and parents of the hazard or risk;
    b. Design a plan with safety rules (in writing);
    c. Make a reasonable effort to enforce the rules with penalties for known infractions;
    d. Skip the activity altogether.
11. In case of an accident, the teacher has a duty to apply first aid until professional medical care can be given. However, teachers should not do anything beyond emergency care. It is generally unwise to go beyond maintaining a student's condition unless the delay in applying treatment itself will cause irreparable harm to the student. When working with students, teachers should always know the closest source of professional medical assistance. Parents should always be notified immediately of any injury to their son or daughter.
12. Students may drive their own cars for a school-sponsored activity unless a danger is foreseeable or there is a school rule to the contrary. For example, if a student is known to be a reckless driver or is known to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, then he should be prohibited from driving.
13. Teachers are not liable for accidents to students simply because they are not present to prevent in-

jury; but teachers are liable if the hazard is foreseeable and they do not take measures to prevent it. For example, students may be excused from the custody of a classroom for independent or community activities where no on-site school supervision is provided. Teachers need not be with them but must know where they are (or are supposed to be) and anticipate hazardous conditions and take reasonable care to prevent them.

14. Nonschool community supervisors bear the same responsibility as school personnel. However, noncertified personnel may risk personal suit without protection of school liability insurance unless expressly covered by school board agreement with the insurance carrier. These individuals are generally considered agents of the teacher in charge and of the school.
15. Teachers are not usually liable for ("immoral") activities of the students in their custody unless they participate in illegal activity or a violation of school rules. For example, knowingly permitting students to kiss or embrace may raise ethical concerns but not legal ones; while, permitting students to consume alcohol would constitute a breach of duty.
16. Teachers have an additional concern in not violating the statutory rights of students in an effort to protect students from injury.

"The fear of lawsuits," says Phillips, "while real, is often used as a needless constraint to program change." At Learning Unlimited, the staff makes every effort to maintain good communication with parents. Because all contracts must be signed by a parent as well as by the teacher and student, parents have a pretty good idea of the kinds of activities their children are involved in. Before trips that take students away from the school for from several days to several weeks, parents, students, and chaperons meet as a group to discuss concerns and clarify the trip itinerary. Meeting in this manner seems to give parents a sense of security about the safety of the trip. For these long trips, students are required to turn in a permission slip (see Appendix). The document, drawn up by an attorney, should hold up in court if it is signed by parents in all applicable spaces. While potential liability needs to be considered, teachers and administrators must balance it against doing what is educationally appropriate for a group of students.

Attitudes Impeding Change

A final consideration one has to contend with in the process of helping students find experiences in the real world are two arguments which commonly come up when dealing with curriculum innovations. The first is the attitude of "anything that is fun cannot possibly be learning," and the second is the "we did it and survived" syndrome. These two attitudes probably do more to impede the flow of progress than any logistical, technical, or legal problems.

Directly related to America's preoccupation with the Puritan ethic is the belief that to truly learn and grow, one must suffer extensively. Endless drill in grammar and math, rigid rows of desks, and impersonal teachers supposedly instill discipline in students and build "character." Those people who think that suffering is necessary for learning to take place are threatened by the idea of fun intermingled with the serious business of learning.

Those same people who think fun and spontaneity corrupt the learning process often argue that "they did it and survived," in spite of continuing studies and statistics that make a compelling case for school reform. The veil of time has blurred the memories of their adolescence and they assume, with a certain amount of conceit, that high school helped make them what they are today. They may be right, but in his research on the high school experiences of Americans, Ralph Keyes reported, "Just as interesting as what people *do* recall from high school is what they *don't* — like education, the supposed reason for gathering. An occasional inspiring teacher may stand out in the memory, but rarely anything that went on in a classroom beyond passing notes." That statement in itself is a scathing indictment of secondary education and may provide ample ammunition in an argument (or friendly discussion) with a person who still sees no need for change.

Discipline and learning to show respect, which are so highly valued in our schools, are learned by students who take on new responsibilities in community-based programs, but in ways different from those resulting from a more traditional approach to learning. The discipline of the students in alternative programs is primarily self-imposed, more a lifelong personal value than is the discipline gained from adhering to rigid rules and to following directions. Respect is given to those teachers who earn it through their professional capabilities and humane approach to teaching. This self-discipline and ability to show respect are internalized

as part of a student's character and do not disappear when the class bell rings or at the beginning of summer vacation.

5. Places — Oases of Community-Based Learning

Photo by Jay Hill

A newspaper internship makes current events come to life for this student.

Traveling to alternative schools, one quickly notes their tremendous diversity. Each of these schools or programs is unique, shaped by the community that supports it and the students and staff whose needs it meets.

Storefronts, office buildings, remodeled warehouses, barns, cabins, and traditional high school facilities house community-based learning projects for students who are bright, slow, average, poor, rich, secure, maladjusted, highly motivated, and totally turned off. Some students are college-bound; others, factory-bound.

The following account of three very different community-based programs illustrates well the way each school adapts its own needs and resources to the principles of community-based learning discussed in Chapter 3. Learning Unlimited, a foundation funded school-within-a-school in suburban Indianapolis, differs greatly from the Public School for Metropolitan Studies located in the center of Chicago's business district or the St. Paul Open School in St. Paul, Minnesota, where kindergartners to high school seniors learn together by sharing a wide variety of community resources.

Learning Unlimited, North Central High School, Indianapolis, Indiana

Three rooms separated by sliding doors, no windows. The desks are unarranged, green chalkboards on casters create a maze of spaces. The walls are covered with sign-up sheets for seminars, field trips, service projects, and community classes. Graffiti has its share of space too: Jimmy Carter with a moustache and horns, drawings by preschool children of staff members, mailing addresses of traveling students, stereo equipment for

sale, photographs, quotes — "Is there life after birth?" "Are there Twinkies after death?" Posters are everywhere. Books abound. Notes dot the student message center which is made of peg board and golf tees. A jelly glass with daisies in it sits inside one of the teacher's mailboxes.

In the center room, one can relax on an old couch or on the well worn rug on the floor. Arrangements of heavy crates serve as bookshelves and seats. Portable chalkboards section off teachers' conference areas in one room. Strange objects hang from the ceiling, reflecting something of the personalities housed in that room each day. A plastic Bicentennial blimp dubbed "the Hindenburg" hovers over one desk; one Styrofoam and feather puppet dances over another. Plants in various stages of growth add warmth to the surroundings.

Students start to filter into the rooms around 8:15. For many of them, the day doesn't officially begin until 9:30, but they like to get there early when they can. By 8:30 the middle section of the three-room complex begins to buzz and on the periphery, a few small groups begin to push chairs together to make seminar circles. After staking their claims, the students surround themselves with the movable green chalkboards, creating a classroom just large enough to serve their needs. They proceed to discuss whatever it was that brought them together, sometimes led by a teacher, sometimes by a student.

A bell rings at 9:30 and chaos reigns as the remainder of the students arrive on the school buses. One student makes his entrance in a tuxedo with a white rose in his buttonhole. Another rushes to greet him, looking as straight as his friend is freaky. They both like photography and excitedly share their latest prints. Several of the teachers stroll in from the lounge and are hailed: "Hey Mike, I read this really weird book over the weekend." "Jay, did you hear that Neil Young is coming to town?" "Judy, you won't believe the ads we found for the propaganda class!" Everyone is glad to see each other.

People begin to settle into their respective activities and things calm down a little as the familiar voices of two students come over the intercom. They call themselves "The Voice from Above" and they offer program announcements everyday before school officially starts. Both are interested in broadcasting and are gaining important practical experience by preparing program news and entertainment spots in a very professional manner. After the announcements, some teachers and students leave the area for seminars in other areas of the building. Some students leave to attend traditional classes within the regular high school program. A number leave the building for community learning ex-

periences such as internships, field trips, service projects, or community classes that they have opted to participate in as part of their academic learning contracts. Others stay around for individual conferences with their teachers, to strum guitars, to talk or study in the part of the complex that students have claimed as their own. Some use the telephones to arrange for new experiences at community sites.

The program director arrives late, having attended a meeting of administrators that morning, and a group of students swarm about him, asking questions and sharing experiences. He grins at them and ducks his head. They follow him into his office to talk excitedly about some project they are working on until his telephone rings. They stand around for a while joking with the secretary and then go about their business.

Oblivious to the uproar, a boy in bib overalls and thongs is typing diligently. He is 40 pages into his first novel and works on it every morning at school. As the lights go off and a film begins, he calmly takes the paper out of the typewriter and walks with the latest chapter over to the desk of his English teacher who helps him evaluate it in terms of style, grammar, structure, and punctuation. He is taking a course in creative writing this semester and will get a grade as well as the royalties (he hopes!) for the novel.

Toward the middle of the day the students and staff gather in the center section of the complex for Town Meeting. One of the student directors leads the meeting and calls on those who have placed issues or announcements on the agenda. A group of students rise to present a simulation of a student discipline board hearing. They read the issue: "John Doe has been in trouble with the assistant principal for loitering in the halls while classes are going on. When confronted, he showed his alternative program pass, which indicated that he was scheduled for a study hall in the alternative program that period. The student claimed it was O.K. for him to be in the halls because he was in the program." The student jury of six listens to the "defendant's" story. Debate follows and the student jury rules that the student was in violation of school regulations. They assign the student three hours of some kind of service project; he must present proof of his participation to one of the teachers. The Town Meeting is opened up for questions and a heated discussion ensues concerning the power of this board. Some of the students think that the board should have the option to remove students from the program who are hurting it; others point up the difficulties with this idea and urge their friends to be more pragmatic. The bell rings and the meeting breaks up with nothing really resolved. Some students continue

their discussions in smaller groups, others are off for lunch, community projects, or classes.

In the afternoon the Southwest Seminar meets in the third room of the complex which is set aside for group discussions and classes. The class is team-taught by English, science, social studies, and math teachers. When the discussion of the novel *Little Big Man* lags a little, students ask some questions of Greg, the social studies teacher who will be accompanying 10 of them on an upcoming trip to Arizona. They are anxious to know about the Navajo Indian teen-agers they will be living with and going to school with for two weeks. Greg points out to them some of the differences between their reactions and those of the Navajo students to the novel they have been reading.

The day winds down about 2:00. A lot of students are gone by then — either home, or to jobs, or to community activities. The telephone rings less often, only somewhat short of constantly. In one corner the art teacher is teaching origami to a small group of students. At the other end of the room, several teachers sit with four or five students noisily discussing politics. People visiting from another school system saunter through, seeming a little perplexed by the loose atmosphere. The student host assures them that it just *seems* like chaos.

By 4:15 everyone is gone. The rooms, despite their comfortable disarray, seem strangely cold without the laughter of the people who warm them all day. The janitors have given up and don't even come in any more, leaving the clutter suspended in darkness until morning when life comes again to school.

Beneath the noise and clutter of the physical surroundings, students and teachers are experimenting with new structures of secondary education. In this competency-based program, students are responsible for learning a well-defined group of skills for each class they take. Activities that will help students learn decision-making skills are emphasized. The activities range from analyzing a novel to working in a publishing house as an intern in order to sharpen writing skills. Some students work through a textbook much like students in traditional classes, but augment their studies with practical experiences like hospital volunteer work for health class, an internship with a veterinarian for zoology class, or a field trip to the stock exchange for economics class. A number of small group seminars are offered during each grading period to insure that students have the peer group interchange so valuable to learning.

Each student's curriculum is individualized; he decides how he will go about learning the prescribed skills and writes his plans in a learning contract at the beginning of each grading period.

The contract, to be considered valid, must be signed by the student, his teacher, and a parent or guardian. Students grade themselves, based on how well they have fulfilled their contracts, taking into consideration the quality as well as the quantity of work done. If the teacher disagrees with a student's self-assessment, they negotiate to determine a grade that is acceptable to both parties.

Learning Unlimited is a community-based program. Students are required to have at least three community experiences each semester; at least one of those experiences must be on an extended basis. Although students are encouraged to create and arrange their own community experiences, for those who find it difficult to do this, a staff member is available to help. Also required each semester is mastery of a number of "survival skills." These practical skills such as automobile maintenance, swimming, nutrition, personal finance, and first aid are considered an essential part of the curriculum.

Internships, intensives, field trips, and guest speakers comprise the bulk of community experiences in the program, but students and teachers have experimented with some success with community classes, exchanges, student publications, and service projects. Based on the Walkabout model, the program focuses on seven challenge areas: adventure and field experience, logical inquiry and research, creativity and enrichment, service, futurism and decision making, cognitive skills, and practical skills. Students use these categories as guidelines for planning well-rounded learning contracts.

Learning Unlimited offers competency-based courses in English, world history, government, American history, sociology, psychology, etymology, business organization and management, accounting, business law, business math, geography, typing, health and safety, speech, drama, biology, biology topics, botany, art, physical education, values and issues, economics, algebra, and math topics to the 250 students who participate in it each semester. Each student has a unique curriculum that he plans according to his interests and learning style. A number of students opt to take only one class in the program, sometimes because they are particularly weak in an area and think they would benefit from individual help, and sometimes because of a special interest that stimulates them to dig deeper than a traditional classroom environment allows. Other students choose to take as many of their classes as possible in the program, enrolling only in foreign languages, music, some specialized sciences and social studies, and vocational classes in the traditional school.

Of the 250 students involved in Learning Unlimited, about

100 each semester take at least half of their classes in the program. These students, who comprise the "core" of the program and who generally identify strongly with it, provide a large percentage of the data used for evaluation. Program students, chosen by a committee of staff and students on the basis of their application and a personal interview, represent a racial, socioeconomic, and intellectual cross-section of the North Central High School student population.

In a program of participatory management, the staff, which is composed of a director, eight teachers, a community coordinator, a secretary, a university intern, and two student directors, takes an active part in writing curriculum, setting program goals, reviewing and adapting program components, and evaluating their peers and the program. In addition to teaching responsibilities, each adult staff member except the secretary oversees a "family group" made up of approximately 10 students and their families. The staff leader meets weekly with the students during school hours and monthly with the students and their parents as a means of keeping lines of communication open between the family and the school. Some family groups choose to focus on recreational activities, others on service projects. Some are extremely active and close-knit, others simply keep in touch, keeping actual meeting time to a minimum. Since students are free to join the family group that most appeals to them, there is little problem meeting the needs of most people.

The staff at Learning Unlimited concerns itself with the affective growth of the students as well as their academic progress. Although it is difficult to measure this type of growth with traditional evaluation methods, personal interviews with students confirm the affective growth that is occurring. Each Learning Unlimited student keeps a daily journal that is regularly read by his English teacher and may be read on request by any of his other teachers in the program. The journals not only provide a good way for students to let off steam about things that bother them, but also provide valuable insight into the student's personality and the difficulties in his personal life that may affect his ability to function at school. The relationships between teachers and students in this environment are strong and often go beyond the common boundaries found in traditional education. People relate to people; each person is aware of the responsibilities that go along with a close relationship.

Learning Unlimited, funded in 1974 by the Lilly Endowment, is a school-within-a-school. An important portion of its mandate includes an effort to generate change within the traditional school. In stimulating a re-evaluation of traditional teaching and learn-

ing methods, the staff attempts to promote an awareness of the wide variety of options available. The attitudes of regular faculty toward the alternative program range from outright hostility or indulgence to cooperation and enthusiasm. In the four years of the program's existence in this suburban high school of about 3,500 students, noticeable improvement has occurred in terms of acceptance by the regular faculty, and a number of positive experiments have resulted from inservice programs sponsored by the administration and the alternative program staff.

The program's outside foundation funding will continue through the 1978-79 school year, at which time an evaluation will be made and a decision rendered as to whether public funds will be appropriated to continue operation. Learning Unlimited now operates at a lower per-pupil cost than the traditional program of the high school.

Chicago Public School for Metropolitan Studies, Chicago, Illinois

Making your way down bustling Michigan Avenue about midway between the Prudential Building and the Chicago River, you might not even notice Chicago Metro, for at first glance it looks just like any other of the dozens of office buildings that line the streets of Chicago's Loop. But an unusual number of teen-agers emerge regularly from the revolving doors at 223 North Michigan. Small groups of students mill around in front of the building. Lounging against plate glass windows, they smoke cigarettes and talk animatedly as they take a break from classes.

Investigating further inside the revolving door, you find yourself in a small lobby thick with cigarette smoke and dotted with adolescents in various activities. Several read paperback books intently, oblivious to a heated discussion in one corner of the room. One sits on the floor, thoughtfully writing in a notebook propped up on his knees. Another sleeps sitting up, an abandoned book open beside him. Several glance up and smile to indicate their willingness to help you figure out what you've stumbled into.

Colorful signs on posterboard and construction paper confirm your growing suspicion that this cannot possibly be a normal business office building. Cleverly illustrated, the signs advertise upcoming events, depict typical class rivalries, recruit for participation in sporting contests, and bear information from the faculty. Incredibly enough, this is a school!

An elevator carries you to the spacious administrative offices of the Chicago Public School for Metropolitan Studies. From win-

dows that offer a panoramic view of the city, one can see for miles. Since 1971, Metro students have been using urban Chicago's vast resources to help them learn. They can walk to the Shedd Aquarium, Field Museum, Adler Planetarium, Chicago Art Institute, Chicago Public Library, DePaul University, City Hall, Goodman Theater, and the financial district. Resources easily accessible by bus or commuter train include Navy Pier, Lincoln Park, the University of Chicago, the Museum of Science and Industry, and Chinatown. These exciting learning resources are combined with more traditional teaching methods and materials at the Metro headquarters. Wandering around the school, one also catches glimpses of environments more common to a high school: bulletin boards, bookshelves, algebraic equations on a blackboard, a noisy snack bar.

Chicago Metro is responsible for the secondary education of some 350 students. These students, who come from every neighborhood in the city, fulfill all Chicago Board of Education requirements for a high school diploma during their four years at Metro. Chosen by lottery from approximately 3,000 applicants, Metro students reflect the rich ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of Chicago.

Metro's principal, Nate Blackman, explains that the nature of Metro's educational program reflects a number of ideas about learning that the staff and students are testing and developing. The people at Metro believe strongly that:

1. The possibilities for meaningful education are enhanced when such education occurs in real-life situations, including the businesses, cultural institutions, and neighborhoods of a city.
2. Students can learn from people with varied skills and interests — lawyers, electricians, artists, newspaper reporters. A skilled teacher can help a student use the talents of these professionals to gain a rich and individualized education.
3. An urban school curriculum must include student involvement in decision making. Students become more independent and motivated learners by helping make decisions about how their school will be structured and how their own education will proceed.
4. A fairly small learning community of teachers and students is easier for students to relate to than a larger community. This community of learners must provide both constant support and continuing evalu-

ation feedback to the student regarding his directions for learning.

To implement this philosophy the Metro staff has developed a three-part program consisting of learning units, individual placements, and counseling groups.

The learning units provide the basic learning experiences in the program. Traditional subject areas like geometry and chemistry and basic skills such as reading are taught in learning units by the school's certified staff and by staff from Chicago business, agency, service, and cultural institutions. A great number of the learning units deal with topics not usually included in a high school curriculum — studying the current show at the Museum of Contemporary Art, studying probability with an insurance actuary, learning film making techniques from television film producers, and learning about a community's problems from a neighborhood organization. Except for fulfilling a few requirements like drug education, driver education, consumer education, and a public law test, a student is free to choose the learning units in the Metro catalog that appeal to him most. The catalog usually includes descriptions of about 100 courses. Some students complete learning units independently. They draw up a contract with teachers, describing what they are setting out to learn, how they will learn it, and a method of evaluation.

Individual placements provide an opportunity for a student to work in a place in the city that interest him. Metro students have been placed in secretarial pools, animal hospitals, zoos, preschools, industrial laboratories, community organizations, political campaign headquarters, and lawyers' offices. Individual placements work best when the student is given some real responsibilities in the organization and the opportunity to understand how it functions overall.

Counseling groups constitute the organizational core of the Metro program. Consisting of 15-20 students who meet for three hours each week, the counseling groups are devoted to discussions and other group activities, individual counseling, and program planning. Bringing together students from diverse backgrounds, the counseling groups are the fundamental forum where students make themselves heard on decisions pertinent to the school's organization.

These three components, learning units, individual placements, and counseling groups, constitute a student's program; they may cause him to travel from one end of the city to another during a typical day. A student might begin his day interviewing inmates at a state prison as part of a course in penal justice, and

then head for the Loop where his counseling group meets in a conference room provided by Montgomery Ward. Ending his day he might photograph buildings as a part of a class in city planning. The next day his schedule might include a class in electronics at the telephone company, a free period at the library, and a few hours' relaxation at Metro headquarters.

A second student might have a totally different set of experiences chosen to suit his interests and abilities. His program for one cycle could consist of a journalism course taught in part by practicing reporters, a physics course using lab facilities at the University of Illinois, a placement in a quality control laboratory in a chemical company, and a course on improvisational theater at Second City.

Metro's school year is divided into four ten-week cycles. At the beginning of each cycle students register for an assortment of the learning experiences listed and described in the class catalog. At the cycle's completion the student and his teachers fill out a detailed evaluation report of his work. No grades are given at Metro; all credit is given on a pass/fail basis. Each learning unit, individual placement, and independent study project help fulfill state and system requirements for graduation in major subject areas such as English, art, social studies, physical education, mathematics, science, and music. Quantified by a point system based on Carnegie units, each of the learning activities is assigned a numerical value according to quantity of work required and number of hours spent. Each student's credit is recorded on a transcript and kept on file in the Metro office.

Chicago Metro is now seven years old. Although a strong commitment to learning and to the school is still evident in the Metro students and staff, the institution has suffered considerably in the past few years from local political pressures and from the status of the national economic picture.

Policy differences between the Chicago School Board and Nate Blackman, the popular principal of Metro, resulted in the Board's taking control of hiring the school's personnel. As members of the original Metro staff left, the Board replaced them, in some instances, with traditional teachers who had little commitment to and occasionally outright disapproval of alternative or experimental education.

Blackman's assistant, Lee Alo, reports increasing difficulty in finding business people willing to work with Metro students. The business community, instrumental in the original planning and organizing of the school, has been hit hard by inflation and staff cutbacks. Business people are hard put to find the time or personnel to work with students. These cutbacks have had some

effect on the availability of community-based experiences for Metro students.

Such factors have definitely affected staff morale negatively, but in spite of this students provide enthusiastic accounts of their experiences at the school. One freshman talked about his current Metro schedule which included courses in auto technology at the Museum of Science and Industry, astronomy at the Adler Planetarium, art at the Chicago Art Institute, marine biology at the Shedd Aquarium, the origins of man at the Field Museum, as well as several more basic courses taught at the Metro facility. Smiling shyly he concluded, "It's a nice school. I can't compare this to anything I've ever done before!"

St. Paul Open School, St. Paul, Minnesota

Built around a small courtyard and protected by an iron fence, the old red brick building that houses the St. Paul Open School resembles a very traditional school. But open the door and you know right away that you have arrived someplace special.

Recently moved by the St. Paul School Board from a spacious, renovated warehouse designed especially to meet its needs, the Open School now has to share an old, rather unwieldy facility with several other special programs. In spite of being uprooted from their open, flexible warehouse to a facility still geared for traditional learning, the students and staff have managed to transfer the warmth intact, with no problem at all.

Like most community-based schools where students' curricula are highly individualized, the environment may appear chaotic to a visitor. In nooks and crannies all over the school, students in small groups or alone are engaged in a kaleidoscope of learning activities. Little children and adolescents clatter up and down the stairs, rushing through doors and down hallways carrying books, magazines, art supplies, slide rules, telephone books, and other materials that might be used for learning. In one corner of the lobby, a small group of older students discuss angrily the behavior or one of their peers. Very protective of their school, they soundly disapprove of any action that might tarnish its reputation in the community. Lined up at the door, a covey of children on their way to a field trip squirm in anticipation while a teacher counts heads and checks mittens. In the office, all work is suspended temporarily to attend to a sick little girl. Teachers picking up their mail or making a phone call stop and express concern. Calling her by name, they wish her well, often tendering a pat on the head or a brief hug before going on their way. Catty-

cornered from the office is a comfortable lounge area set aside for community volunteers. Here there is always coffee brewing and a friendly smile for volunteers who have found a few moments to relax. Students wander in and out, some helping, some looking for a friend or teacher, some just to say "hi" to a favorite volunteer.

The St. Paul Open School was born in 1971 as a result of parents' organized demands for an alternative school. According to the goals established by parents, teachers, and students early in the school's development, the program is designed to help students:

1. Approach learning with confidence and joy,
2. See themselves as worthwhile persons and have an active positive regard for every person as an individual,
3. Develop an understanding of human social systems and physical environments,
4. Develop and reassess personal values,
5. Develop social skills, including conciliation, persuasion, honest communication, and group decision making,
6. Develop the skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, computation, learning, and critical thinking,
7. Develop and maintain good health habits, physical fitness, recreational skills, and positive body awareness,
8. Be willing to take risks, make commitments, become involved, and be accountable for their actions,
9. Have a sense of awe and wonder, a capacity for aesthetic appreciation and enjoyment,
10. Become creative, curious, self-directed, and open to new experiences,
11. Recognize that their individual actions can influence the course of events,
12. Recognize the humor and incongruity that is a part of the human experience.

Perhaps the distinctive factor in meeting these goals and creating the Open School's special atmosphere is the combination of so many ages and kinds of students. The school's 500 students, from age 5 to 18, enroll by choice. They come from all over St. Paul to learn together and reflect the socioeconomic and racial make-up of the city. The younger students learn a lot from the teen-agers, and, in turn, the little people, with their uncomplicated enthusiasm for life and their spontaneous affection for

people they like, can help smooth over some of the rocky phases of adolescence.

Open School students of all ages avail themselves of the rich community resources in the St. Paul area to help them learn. Field trips and community action projects are used at all levels. Older students participate regularly in cross-country trips (intensives) and internships. However, the strongest component of the Open School's community learning program is the creative manner in which the staff and students use volunteers in the school building. Augusta Strowder, the volunteer coordinator, finds as many as 250 volunteers each year to fill a variety of needs at the Open School. Drawing her volunteers primarily from the ranks of Open School parents, she also taps universities, businesses, professions, senior citizen centers, and agencies and institutions in the area. Among the roles taken on by volunteers are teacher, area supervisor, driver, tutor, office helper, "fixer-upper," and gym assistant. So, in addition to the unique blend of ages and kinds of students are the scores of adults working in the school each week. Unlike most schools in which students are isolated with their peers from interaction with any adults except their teachers, the St. Paul Open School's many volunteers bring in a little bit of the real world each time they visit the school. Adults and students learn to work together on an equal basis, each respecting the needs and talents of the other.

The school's system of adviser/advisee groups is the component of the program which brings everything together. Each staff member has an advisee group of 10 to 12 students with whom he meets regularly, both individually and as a group. The advisee group is the basis for all program planning and record keeping. The adviser helps each of his students plan a well-rounded, satisfying curriculum to meet his individual needs. He also acts as a liaison between the parent and the school, conferring regularly with parents concerning their children's progress in learning. Like Metro's counseling groups and Learning Unlimited's family groups, the advisee groups provide a sense of stability and identity for the students.

The St. Paul Open School, designated as an experimental demonstration school, is not bound by state graduation requirements. The school's advisory board, made up of teachers, parents, and students, developed requirements that substitute experiences and competencies for the traditional graduation requirements based on Carnegie units and grades. To graduate from the Open School, students must demonstrate competency in the following six areas:

1. Career Education. Job-seeking skills, ability to develop plans for the future and investigate career choices.
2. Community Involvement and Current Issues. The ability to participate actively in and learn from the community in which one lives. The ability to grapple with the complexities of current issues and events.
3. Consumer Awareness. Understanding the principles of comparison shopping, personal finance, consumer protection; demonstrating an ability in basic mathematics by scoring 70% or higher on a basic mathematics test
4. Cultural Awareness. Understanding the differences in attitudes, actions, and experiences of one's own culture and at least two others, one of which must be Spanish-speaking Americans Native Americans, or black Americans.
5. Information Finding. The ability to identify, use, and evaluate a variety of resources to gain information that is important and useful to the student.
6. Personal and Interpersonal Skills. Understanding of the reasons and methods for maintaining a healthy body through good health habits, physical fitness, and recreational skills. Understanding interpersonal skills such as group process, decision making, conciliation, and human interaction; demonstrating the ability to write coherently, comprehend written information, and communicate orally.

Students take on responsibility for their own graduation requirements. Seniors must select a graduation committee made up of the program coordinator, the counselor, and his adviser. He must schedule all necessary me ings of the committee after first working out a plan with his adviser as to how to fulfill and validate the graduation competencies. Finally he must submit a formal written description of his education for the past three years and a brief description of post-high school plans.

Like many other alternative schools, the St. Paul Open School has been affected by the school financial difficulties of the last few years which, combined with the decrease in school enrollments, have caused widespread teacher layoffs and budget cutbacks. Several valuable staff members have had to be dropped and money for traveling and for creative projects is tight. However, commitment to the Open School has not waned. Parents and the St. Paul community-at-large still feel strongly about the school's worth. In addition, the national attention gained from

the school's innovative teaching methods has helped the staff obtain some outside funding for special projects. The staff's eagerness to share its ideas with others interested in alternative education has resulted in commitments to the school's survival by friends from outside the St. Paul community. At this point, the school seems to have survived its move to new quarters and its budget cutbacks and looks forward to indefinite continued operation.

Schools Without Walls

The following schools have made the community a focal point of the curriculum. Each has adapted to the nature of the community and the economic, racial, and intellectual makeup of students involved in the program. The schools listed operate in large urban centers, smaller towns, and rural communities.

ACTION LEARNING CENTER
Niles Township High School
Oakton at Edens
Skokie, Illinois

BROWN SCHOOL
4th and Broadway
Louisville, Kentucky

CITY AS SCHOOL
59 Schermerhorn Street
Brooklyn, New York

CITY SCHOOL
143 Bostwick Ave. N.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan

CITY SCHOOL
210 S. Brooks
Madison, Wisconsin

CITY WIDE LEARNING COMMUNITY
2515 Clifton Ave.
Cincinnati, Ohio

FOXFIRE
Rabun Gap, Georgia

MOUNTAIN OPEN HIGH SCHOOL
2988 Ox Bow Road
Evergreen, Colorado

PONTOON
Marion High School
750 West 26th St.
Marion, Indiana

PROJECT EAST
Madison East High School
2222 East Washington Ave.
Madison, Wisconsin

SENIOR SEMINAR
Mitchell High School
1205 Potter Drive
Colorado Springs, Colorado

WALDEN III
1012 Center
Racine, Wisconsin

WALKABOUT
Putnam/Northern Westchester County BOCES
Yorktown Heights, New York

6. Faces — Kids at Work in the Community

Photo by Barbara Shoup

This student shares his learning as he explains the mystery of making maple sugar to a group of kindergartners.

The nature of adolescence requires that highs be higher and lows be lower than at any other time of life. Ravaged inside by growing pains at one moment, reeling crazily in a private world the next, teen-agers often find themselves involuntarily cloistered from a society ill at ease with such raw emotion. Caught between childhood and adulthood, they retreat into their own elaborate societies born of and perpetuated by the traditional American high school. And impatient adults, who either ignore the difficulties of adolescence or find them far too painful to remember, look on in puzzlement.

The following portraits are of real people — teen-agers who have ventured out into the adult world and found it more exciting and rewarding than the high school they left behind. In some cases the adolescents have taken on adult-type responsibilities; in other cases they have merely taken on the responsibility for teaching themselves what they need to know — no small task! Combining the natural intensity of adolescence with meaningful experiences in the adult world, they are visibly growing and maturing in positive ways.

Mark Edelstein

"It's 62 degrees in the metroplex and the sun is shining! This is Mark Edwards from WGRT and we're going to spend the morning together, playing the hits!" With professional command of the complicated technical equipment, Mark flips some switches to tune in a peppy commercial and prepares the next record for the turntable. Frowning, he looks over the control panel and makes some minor adjustments. His pressing duties suspended for an instant, he relaxes. He leafs through a news magazine

and sips a coke until it's time to resume his disc jockey role.

On the air Mark is boisterous and witty, but when he explains the high school education he planned for himself, he becomes deadly serious as he peers at you through his thick-lensed glasses. Plagued with a visual handicap that makes it difficult for him to learn in traditional ways, Mark decided to build his high school curriculum around broadcasting, an area that has been vitally interesting to him for a number of years and that he plans to pursue as a career. He decided to make extensive use of the community because he thought it was the only way for him to learn what he wanted to know. For him, classroom learning couldn't provide what could be learned from professional people working in the field. In most cases his community activities helped fulfill learning objectives for the classes he took in the alternative program, but occasionally he did things simply because he wanted to, receiving no academic credit.

Over a two-and-a-half year period, Mark's community activities included internships at three radio stations (one of which became a paying job), a wide variety of field trips, interviews, observations at radio and television facilities around Indianapolis, and a week-long trip to the broadcasters convention in Chicago. For English credit he wrote a manual based on his experiences and extensive research for use by students in a beginning course in broadcasting. His high school career culminated in a week's intensive to New York City where he arranged personal interviews with newspeople Harry Reasoner and Jane Pauley and toured a variety of broadcasting facilities in Manhattan.

His original interest in becoming a disc jockey led Mark to explore the broadcasting field comprehensively -- from playing the hits and reporting the news to studying the psychology of advertising and mastering the technical aspects of the field. His explorations have yielded an important personal discovery. No longer determined to become a disc jockey, Mark has set his sights considerably higher. He'd like, ultimately, to be involved in program management.

Looking to the future, Mark has a definite direction in mind. "I want to get a very broad view of the media. A lot of the people I've met, if they're radio people, they just know radio; if they're television people, they just know television. Maybe they just know the performance end or the technical end. I don't want to do that; I want to get a well-rounded understanding of the media industry in general."

A rare person, able to combine his innate creativity with tre-

mendous self-discipline, Mark loves to learn and goes about it with warmth, wit, and sensitivity. He is the kind of person who will probably get exactly where he plans to go.

Barbara Davis

Barbara Davis is one of those lucky people with an inborn talent for writing. At 17, words flow easily from her pen in patterns that would make many veteran writers envious. She is an imaginative dreamer who longs for the richness of life beyond adolescence.

Stifled by English classes that offered few writing challenges beyond highly structured five-paragraph themes, she turned to Learning Unlimited, hoping for the chance to broaden her writing talents. During her junior year she attended a community class on writing taught by the managing editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*. Enamored of the publishing world from this brief exposure at the *Post*, she arranged an internship that lasted most of the spring, and by summer she had worked herself into a paying job editing manuscripts and doing research work for special books and magazine issues.

During her experience at the *Post*, Barbara has developed a satisfying working relationship with a number of professionals, earning both their respect and friendship. She has come to understand how the industry ticks and what publishers look for in a writer. Editing has taught her to recognize writing talent and has undoubtedly affected her ability to take full advantage of her own. In short, her association with a prestigious magazine has given her a head start toward her goal of becoming a writer.

Steve Wille

Steve Wille is an all-or-nothing person. Though art is his consuming interest, his natural curiosity demands that he include every aspect of the world around him in his explorations. When he tackles a project, some kind of explosion usually occurs. As he talks about his latest adventure or discovery, his blue eyes snap and his hands tell as much of the story as the words. His infectious grin reflects the joy he finds in life.

To help fulfill course competencies for senior government, Steve arranged a six-week internship with Common Cause, a citizen's lobbying group, where he worked on the campaign for

Indiana's passage of the controversial Equal Rights Amendment. He spent three or more hours each week working at the Common Cause office with Indiana ERA coordinator Lovonna Groh, as well as attending rallies and strategy sessions in the evenings or on weekends.

In addition to helping with general office chores such as typing, filing, and answering the telephone, Steve's tasks included helping disseminate information on the ERA to the Common Cause membership and encouraging people by phone and letter to write to legislators concerning the amendment. To round out his experience, he attended rallies, sat in on senate and house joint hearings, shadowed a lobbyist, and interviewed legislators. Legislative procedure came alive for him as he followed the bill through the house and senate, and he witnessed firsthand the tension and compromise generated in the lobbying procedure. Augmented by guided reading of a government text, the experience opened his eyes to some political realities rarely dealt with in high school government classes.

Perhaps the most valuable outcome of Steve's internship experience was the realization that private citizens could influence decisions concerning the legislation that shapes our society. "While I was at Common Cause, I felt that I was doing something worthwhile, something that counted. I believed in the ERA and what it would do for American men and women. I learned that the American system can really work if you are willing to spend time and effort working for what you believe in. In providing a service to the community, I learned that my vote counted."

Barbara Marer

Barb Marer is a quiet, soft-spoken girl who came to Learning Unlimited for the second semester of her senior year to take some business courses. Planning a secretarial career, she hoped to gain some valuable practical experience. The following are excerpts from a journal she kept while working for Indiana's U.S. Senator, Birch Bayh at his Indianapolis office.

February 28

> *Monday came and being full of excitement and ready to start, I entered the old federal building and rode the elevator up to the fourth floor. I admit, when I got into the building, a feeling of importance did hit. I got to the office and met Ricky and Marta, the receptionists. I got a kick out of watching Ricky handling the phones*

and wondered if I would ever get a chance to do that. I spent most of that afternoon Xeroxing copies of pages of donor lists and typed a few letters. Before I knew it, it was time to go. The time flew by fast, but so far I was enjoying it.

March 2

Today was the day I finally got work to do. I filed some copies of letters in the alphabetical file, then I got to work on the phones. My time had come! "Good afternoon, Senator Bayh's office, may I help you?" The phone is on the federal telecommunications system. Calls from all over came. I loved the people; it was so great.

So many different situations. So many different kinds of calls. One man came in with some interesting articles from the paper that we should send Bayh to read. A lady wanted addresses in Washington. The News *called for a story, and on and on. No phone calls were alike; I didn't know what to expect. It was just great.*

I typed a few letters in between phone calls. They were all different, too. One was to an interested citizen trying to find out more about the legislature. Another went to a prisoner at Pendleton wanting information on his retrial.

It's so neat – so different; you never know what to expect. I always look forward to going back.

April 13

Today I typed a six-page list of representatives from all the counties in Indiana. I also called on the FTS line to get a list of judicial council members. Everything is at your fingertips with this phone system.

April 14

Today in my government class at school we set up the telelecture unit and talked to two of Bayh's aides in Washington. At this time the Senator is on a business trip to Australia, so we talked to the aides, asking questions about the legislature and about the office. The telelecture unit is an interesting piece of equipment and a great learning experience.

April 18, 20, 25, 27

I did just about all the normal secretarial duties that I'm responsible for: opening the mail, typing letters,

writing some of them, Xeroxing, answering the phones, typing news releases, filing, and handling any other situations that come up.

Monday, May 2

A busy day! A lot of work needed to be done because the Senator was to arrive the next day. His assistant from Washington has been in Indianapolis since last Wednesday. He had a lot of memos that needed to be typed concerning the Senator's plans, including topics for speaking and information for him to use. It's all worked out so well and planned so perfectly for when he arrives.

May 3

I went with Bob and Jenny to pick up Senator Bayh at his hotel room. It was a fun trip driving to Crawfordsville – we had a good time. We got the Senator to get on the C.B. for the first time. We had breakfast at the Holiday Inn and then stopped by a new Oldsmobile place so the Senator could speak with the owner. Then we went to the high school where Senator Bayh presented an award and had a question-and-answer session with the students. We came back to Indianapolis late that morning; Bob and the Senator had to catch a plane back to Washington at 11:00. I had a really good time – he was a really neat person to be with. I feel it was an amazing experience and very interesting. I liked doing something like that. It makes you feel important inside.

May 9, 11

I went back to the office and did the normal secretarial duties I'm responsible for. Even if it's just simple work like opening the mail and sorting it, it all seems so important. So I try my hardest to come out with my best. I've really enjoyed the internship. I started out doing the general office work: typing letters, typing and stuffing envelopes, typing press releases, and Xeroxing. I went on to answer the phone later, all the lines including the WATS line. I handled many different kinds of situations. It was very important to listen carefully to each person. I also opened mail, replying to some. Occasionally I had to make outgoing calls to get information. I was kind of thrilled when I made calls to all the new officers and the liaison committees.

Today I called Washington, D.C., all afternoon – the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Smithsonian Institution, even the White House – and it is just kind of thrilling inside to do that. All general office skills and other work I have done I have enjoyed, and I feel a sense of satisfaction out of doing it. The office here in Indianapolis is an important part of the Senator's operation for keeping Indiana people aware of what is going on. It's a place for people to turn and it also keeps a bond with the Washington office so the Senator is aware of what is going on in his home state of Indiana. I've enjoyed the past weeks of working in his office. It has made me more aware of one part of our government.

Shelley Davis

Several years ago when an earthquake devastated Guatemala, Indianapolis citizens decided to help. A travel club donated cargo space in their chartered plane and people from the business and professional sectors donated clothing, medical supplies, and food. When the response to the South American disaster snowballed and a deluge of contributions poured in, the travel club sent out a plea for volunteers to pack the plane in time for the scheduled departure.

Shelley Davis, during her first semester in Learning Unlimited, was one of the dozen or so students who offered to help. She says the experience made a bigger impact on her than some of her later, more extensive experiences. She liked the spirit of camaraderie among the volunteers as they sorted through mountains of old and new clothes, shoes, and bedding and attempted to distribute them evenly in endless packing crates. The hangar was cold on that brisk winter day, but the students didn't notice as they formed human assembly lines to move the boxes across the immense building to the cargo hold of the plane. A feeling of immediacy kept spirits high in spite of the backbreaking work. Taking a short break, the students were treated to a huge sack of hamburgers by one of the adult volunteers who was impressed with their fortitude.

Some of the students explored the airplane's interior, asking questions of the many mechanics and other airline personnel who had been pressed into duty to aid the effort. At the day's end, tired and sore, the students left the cavernous hangar feeling deeply satisfied about how they had spent the day. Due largely to their efforts, the plane was completely loaded in time. Hun-

dreds of homeless people in Guatemala directly benefited by these students' willingness to help. Shelley remembers a lot of details about that day; it helped to shape her strong commitment to community-based learning.

The summer after she graduated from high school, I asked Shelley to describe an average school day. She started and stopped several times, perplexed, until she realized that during the two years she was a student in Learning Unlimited, there had been no such thing as an "average day." "The only thing I did *every* day," she recalled, "was spend a lot of time on the phone arranging community activities!"

A list of Shelley's community-based learning experiences is impressive: she tutored elementary school children for three weeks on the Navajo reservation at Rough Rock, Arizona; hiked the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to North Carolina; made a bicentennial pilgrimage to Boston, Philadelphia, and New York; visited alternative schools in Louisville, Kentucky, Chicago, Illinois, and Bloomington, Indiana; and spent a week at Learning Unlimited's rural campus learning what life is like away from the city. She found professional artists in the community who sometimes gave her lessons in weaving, sculpture, and basketry, in exchange for working in their shops. Vitally interested in the women's rights movement, Shelley explored a variety of areas on this topic to fulfill learning competencies. She interviewed a male secretary and wrote an article about him for *On the Job* magazine. She attended rallies and hearings for the Equal Rights Amendment, acted as a voting delegate to the Indiana Women's Year convention, participated in a seminar on rape presented by two Indianapolis policewomen, and worked on Virginia Dill McCarty's campaign for Indiana attorney general. Her interest in environmental affairs prompted her to take a course in urban ecology that involved her in researching and discussing issues like population control, public transit systems, water pollution, and housing patterns in Indianapolis. She regularly attended hearings in the Indiana legislature concerning environmental issues. During the spring of her senior year she became involved in a Sierra Club task force formed to promote public awareness of the ecological problems and recreational potential of the White river, which cuts across the north side of Indianapolis.

One can see from the long list of activities that kept her busy for her last two years of high school that Shelley Davis is an activist in the best sense of the word. She remembers her high school years as a time of growth, a time in which she developed new perspectives on herself and the world. As a result of her broad experiences, Shelley looks at life with zest; she is ready, waiting,

and unafraid to immerse herself in any endeavor that might help her learn something new. Tempering her open, curious nature and her boundless enthusiasm is a mature awareness of the tremendous amount of effort one must expend to make life rich!

Emmitt Carlton

Every Sunday morning Emmitt Carlton leafs through the *Indianapolis Star* to the "Let's Go" section, which lists recreational activities scheduled in the city during the next week, and circles those that look intriguing. Enrolled in Learning Unlimited's alternative physical education course, he needs to have 30 hours of physical education-related activities for each grading period. Six of those hours are fulfilled through his job as a gym assistant at a nearby junior high school. He uses the "Let's Go" section of the newspaper to find interesting activities to participate in for most of the remaining 24 hours.

An energetic, imaginative young man in top physical condition, Emmitt has discovered activities like Butler University's "Fun Runs," which take place every Saturday morning, and open track meets sponsored by the Indianapolis Jogger's Club. He has participated in bike hikes with the Central Indiana Bicycling Association and several walk-a-thons for charity. YMCA table tennis tourneys and badminton classes have added variety to his physical education curriculum. Also, Emmitt belongs to a very active family group and has helped organize tennis matches and volleyball games for the group. Tennis and bowling with friends and family fill up the few odd hours not scheduled for organized activities.

To gain credit for his activities, Emmitt is required to have a representative of the sponsoring group or, when that is not possible, a parent sign a validation slip for the number of hours spent on the activity. Emmitt always smiles when people comment on his creative use of the community. "I like doing different things all the time," he says.

Robin Wheeler

About 10 minutes by car from the last housing subdivision on the outskirts of the city lies a narrow grove of maple trees. For a few weeks in March drivers slowed down as they passed, wondering at the bustle of activity as teen-agers dressed in blue jeans and heavy woolen shirts and sweaters moved about the

little grove, carefully drilling holes in the maple trees, whittling birch spigots, stoking the campfire, stirring the sap in a huge black cauldron, tossing Frisbees, chopping firewood, and flying kites. The brightly painted buckets hanging from the trees, added a splash of color to the gray tones of winter.

Fascinated by the process of making maple syrup when he and a friend tapped a few trees last year, Robin Wheeler decided to plan a maple syrup camp as the major activity for his course in biology topics. With the help of his teacher, he found a land owner who was willing to let them tap the trees in his maple grove and set up camp for two weeks while the sap was running. After some research, Robin learned that the best sap running conditions were when days were above freezing and nights were below freezing, so he set the middle of March as a target date. During the two weeks that he and six other students manned the camp, they tapped 21 trees and boiled down the sap to make several gallons of pure maple syrup.

Eager to share their learning experience, the students invited a class of 25 kindergartners for a morning of games, crafts, and campfire pancakes. The children arrived early, bounded from their school bus and raced to the camp site shouting questions and squealing with delight at the sight of smoke curling up from around the bubbling cauldron. Robin and his friends welcomed them and then directed them to sit around the campfire. After a few words from their teacher who promised they would soon learn all about the curious things surrounding them, they calmed down and looked up expectantly as Robin explained the rules for the tour of the maple syrup camp. Lining up two-by-two, the kindergartners followed Robin and his friend, Cindy Ward, through a small field to the grove of trees. Robin carried a hand drill, his pocket knife, and some freshly whittled birch spigots. Cindy carried several bright yellow buckets. While Robin and Cindy decided which tree they would tap, the children peered curiously into the buckets already hanging from a number of the maple trees; some were brave enough to reach in and touch the sticky liquid inside. Crowding around Robin when it was time to drill the hole, the kindergartners watched wide-eyed as he drilled at an angle into the tree and the light-colored wood chips curled away from the drill and fell to the ground. When he pulled the drill out, a drop of liquid oozed out.

"Won't it hurt the tree?" asked one child worriedly. "Not if you do it right," answered Robin, and he proceeded to explain the correct way to drill the trees. He pulled two birch spigots from his pocket and passed one around so the children could see and

feel it. He whittled the other just a little until it fit perfectly into the hole he had just drilled; then he notched the top so Cindy could hang one of her buckets from it. As soon as the bucket was placed on the notch, the sticky liquid began to drip into it. Robin and Cindy encouraged the children to stick their fingers under the spigot and taste the sap. A few shrank away, but most of the little fingers battled for position under the spigot.

After trading the empty buckets for ones already full of sap, the group headed back to the campfire where the children learned that the mysterious bubbling liquid they had seen earlier was the sap from the maple trees being boiled down to maple syrup.

The high point of the morning was the breakfast that the students prepared for the kindergartners — pancakes with, of course, maple syrup! One little boy seemed perplexed so Robin asked him if something was bothering him.

"Yes," said the boy. He always thought that maple syrup came from the store; that's where *his* mom got it.

"Well," said Robin with a smile, "you're right, but someone has to make it like we are out here and put it in those nice little jars for you to buy."

"Oh, yeah," said the child, his frown easing, and he dug into his pancakes.

When Robin Wheeler talks about his maple syrup camp, his eyes sparkle and his face lights up. "It was really fun, although a tremendous amount of work," he reports. He already has bigger and better plans for next year!

7. Travel Tips — Suggestions for People Who Want To Experiment

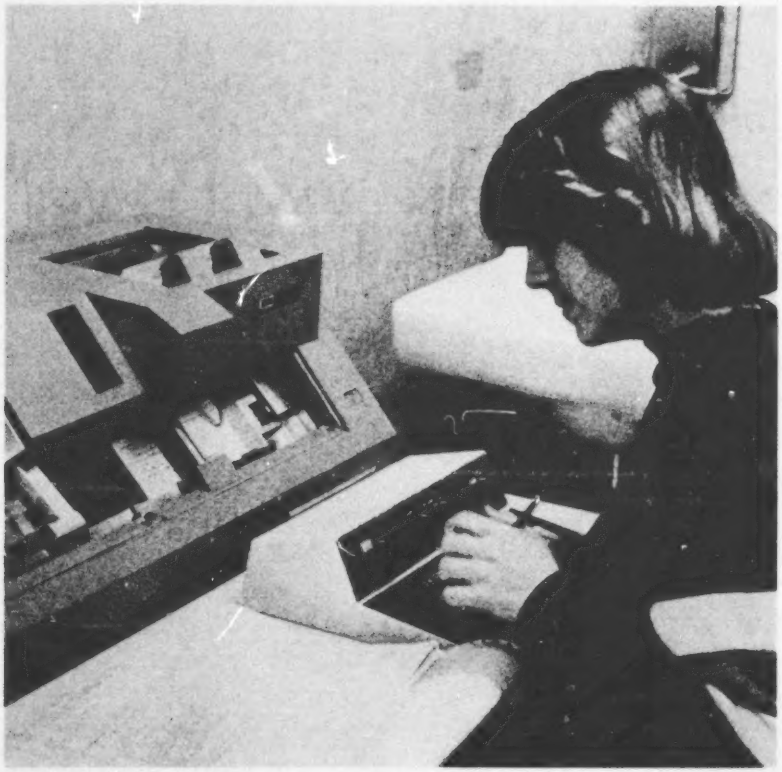

Photo by Jay Hill

This student gains skill as a keypunch operator during her internship with a local corporation.

So you've decided to take the trip. You have accepted the rationale and found yourself smiling a lot during the home slide show. The colorful travel folders have captured your imagination and set your wheels spinning. The places were intriguing, the faces friendly. The roadblocks didn't frighten you at all. You are prepared for your journey.

Although determination and a sense of direction are probably the most crucial elements in whether you will succeed or fail in your attempts to utilize the community in your teaching and learning endeavors, the following "travel tips" may prove to make the road smoother and the journey more enjoyable.

Borrowing Ideas

There's nothing wrong with borrowing ideas; if you see something you like, try it! But don't expect ideas you borrow from other people or programs to work without adapting them to your own situation. Each learning environment is different; even schools that seem to have identical socioeconomic and racial characteristics have different personalities.

Don't count on people adapting their needs and dreams to a rigid idea; let the idea bend and flex to fit the people who attempt to make it real. An idea is nothing without enthusiasm surrounding it to set it in motion. One school's successful innovations cannot be transplanted intact to a new situation; it is the staff and students who will make it come alive in their own particular setting.

Ideas gleaned from reading, talking, and observing should act like the spring lever in a pinball machine that sends the metal marble catapulting upward, bouncing off ledges and down chutes,

ringing bells and sounding buzzers, triggering a series of movements that eventually lead it to rest in the place it fits best.

Creating a Resource File

If you plan to use the community extensively, a good resource file makes life much easier. Such a file is best built over a period of time and should reflect the input of the students who have made contacts with community resource people. But until this sort of file exists (and it *will* take a while), you can start simply by making a few telephone calls and delving into some literature from your local chamber of commerce. Phone calls to local institutions such as museums, hospitals, and other schools can identify key persons students can contact if they want to plan an experience. Most chambers of commerce provide information on landmarks in their cities that have educational significance.

Don't overlook the obvious; parents have a lot to offer in the way of useful information and resources. Involve them. Also, don't overlook the less obvious! For example, firemen often have free time and may be willing to offer a wide variety of learning experiences from first aid to gourmet cooking.

The best resource file is a simple one — one that records the nature and quality of experiences that can be found in the community and the evaluations of students who have participated in them. Although it takes concentrated work to establish a file and keep it up-to-date, the rich experiences born of it are well worth the time spent.

Evaluating Innovative Programs

To many traditional educators, the status quo is held as the norm to which all changes must be compared and judged as good or wanting. The fact that things have been the way they are so long attests to their effectiveness, they think. Change, is acceptable only if carefully observed and measured.

Evaluation is a serious reality if experimental programs are to survive. Teachers must be willing to expose themselves to continual examination both from the outside and from within. Experimental programs, unlike traditional ones, are scrutinized carefully, their weaknesses magnified and their successes acknowledged only when soundly proven.

Save everything! Descriptions of community classes, evaluations by students and resource people, newspaper clippings,

accounts of student projects done for community agencies, photographs, letters of appreciation written concerning students' work well done, student and parent testimonials; anything that attests to the value of community-based education is fair ammunition to use against the periodic attacks by the protectors of the status quo. Rigorous and ongoing evaluation and data gathering by program staff and students, though difficult and time consuming, are ultimately beneficial for justifying the value of experimental programs and for making sure that needs are being met. Used constructively, evaluation should lose its threatening image and be seen as a process that prods and probes, that encourages a program to grow and change in relation to the ever-changing needs of the people it serves.

In addition to the kinds of documentation mentioned earlier, student surveys can be used as important sources of information concerning affective and cognitive growth. Pre- and post-questionnaires can be administered to measure changes in students' perceptions of the world that surrounds them. Teachers and students have had success creating instruments to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their own learning situations. If carefully constructed, such tailor-made instruments can provide data for evaluating programs that are far more relevant than the standardized achievement tests usually used for evaluation.

Dealing with Hostility

Expect hostility. It can come from administrators, teachers, custodians, students, parents, and "concerned citizens." And it can be devastating to program participants caught unawares. Hostility is best dealt with if brought out into the open. Take immediate steps to establish communication between the leaders of the program in question and its challengers.

Parents can play a crucial role in combating hostility that threatens the existence of alternative education programs. A strong contingent of tax paying parents who vociferously demand that the educational system provide for the needs of *all* its students can usually gain the attention of elected school board officials! Perhaps even more valuable, though, is a continuous output of positive information concerning the program throughout the community from the network of parents who are well informed about the program and are satisfied with the opportunities it has provided their children.

A community-based program has an excellent opportunity for creating good school public relations on a one-to-one basis. Each

student who leaves the school to go to a community learning site serves as a representative of his teachers and fellow students. That student's performance and attitudes shape the resource people's opinions of the whole program. A job well done and a lesson well learned are tangible evidence of a program's worth. Students come to understand this rather quickly.

Learning How and When To Compromise

For an alternative school or program to survive in the uncharted red tape jungles of bureaucratic school systems, the people who teach and learn in it must become adept at the fine art of compromise.

Schools-within-schools, especially, can be constrained by the rigid rules and procedures of their "mother" school. By cooperating with rules and regulations that are no more than annoying distractions, students and teachers will find themselves in a better position to negotiate those significant issues that affect program philosophy. If your school requires that all students in the hall during classes require a pass, provide one. If hats are forbidden and smoking and gum chewing prohibited, students should follow these rules. Save your energy to combat policies that interfere with crucial goals and objectives or hamper students' movements. If your school's policy includes a closed campus, one that students cannot leave during school hours, administrators are more likely to negotiate reasonable special privileges for alternative program students if they feel students and teachers have made an honest effort not to interfere with the operation of the traditional school that houses them.

The Soft Revolution, by Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, is an excellent source book for people who desire to make change in a nonviolent manner. The authors' describe not only how students can defend themselves against the system, but how they can turn the system's strength against itself. According to Postman and Weingartner, the confrontation tactics widely used by students in the sixties and early seventies, though not fruitless, have been inefficient given the time and energy spent.

> The SYSTEM remains not only intact but *better than ever prepared to deal with confrontation*. The schools are still murdering almost everybody, intellectually and spiritually, and in spite of all the high-pitched noises, there is no decent "game plan" to stop them.

Judo is the game plan. With it, you do not "work within the system" any more than you run head-on into it. You use the system against itself to work for needed change. But to use the principles of judo to facilitate educational change, one must understand exceedingly well the structure of the system one is dealing with, understand the symbology of that system, understand the psychology of those who comprise the system. This requires more thought and self-discipline than spitting in a cop's face.

The *hard* revolution is counter-productive because it provokes violence, reaction, recrimination, retaliation, loss of strategic support and, all in all, produces more problems than it solves. It also requires no brains or wit at all. Any fool with long hair can stand on a corner and scream "Pigs!" or "Do it!" or "Power to the People!" It's not only fatal, it's no fun.

Community-Based Education and Competency-Based Education

In our earlier discussion on evaluation, it was pointed out how difficult it is to compute a precise value for community-based experiences, but the flip side to that problem is the ease with which community-based learning experiences can be adapted to a competency-based curriculum. Translating subject areas into specific compentency-based skills is one of the basic principles of community-based learning. A skill is measurable, the student either masters it or he doesn't; and it's definable, the student either knows what and why he is learning or he doesn't. A comparison of learning objectives in a typical course outline for junior English with the sharper focus of a curriculum based on competency-based requirements illustrates how specific skills can be taught through community-based learning experiences.

A typical course outline for junior English (available, by the way, only to teachers) first lists required and optional textbooks. Objectives are limited and vague.

To write essay answers

To sharpen spelling skills

To work effectively in small group presentations

To recognize the motives of speakers and writers

To understand that some literature is read for mere enjoyment while other literature is read for a deeper purpose

With objectives stated in this manner, what students in this school will learn in their junior English class will depend on each individual teacher's interpretation of the objectives.

Contrast the above with the objectives of a competency-based curriculum that sets forth a list of specific skills to be acquired but leaves the choice of activities up to the student.

> The student will pass a spelling test of 180 words taken from the handbook frequency list with 100% accuracy.
>
> Given three different social situations, the student will identify the appropriate level of language (standard, nonstandard, or formal) to fit the situation.
>
> The student will write essay questions following the five-step pattern: rephrase question in topic sentence, define terms if necessary, organize ideas by subtopic paragraphs, give adequate support to each idea, and give conclusions.
>
> The student will take notes from a minimum of three books or magazines in order to learn a standard pattern for notetaking and use them to demonstrate his ability to write footnotes.

These examples of specific learning competencies illustrate the superiority of a competency-based curriculum in terms of actually measuring and defining a student's accomplishments.

A school committed to community-based learning experiences will find a competency-based approach to basic skills far more adaptable to new modes of learning than a traditional curriculum. Additional information on learning competencies or performance objectives may be found by writing:

Principal
Craig Alternative School
Craig, AK 99921

Director, PACE Program
Central Catholic High School
1836 Logan St.
Denver, CO 80203

Director
Southeast Free School
915 Dartmouth St.
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Joe Nathan, Assistant Principal
Murray Jr./Sr. High School
1450 Grantham,
St. Paul, MN 55108

Ralph Plagman, Coordinator
Metro High School
404 17th St. S.E.
Cedar Rapids, IA 50403

Joan Kalvelage, Special Projects Assistant
Eugene Public Schools
200 N. Monroe
Eugene, OR 97402

Director
Alternative Learning Project
180 Pine St.
Providence, RI 02903

Hal Wilson
National Assessment of Education Progress
1860 Lincoln Ave.
Denver, CO 80203

Gary Phillips, Learning Unlimited
North Central High School
1801 E. 86th
Indianapolis, IN 46220

Appendix

The forms in this appendix are those used in the Learning Unlimited program at North Central High School in Indianapolis, Indiana. They are offered here as examples of the types of records we found useful for the variety of community-based activities in our alternative education program. Others are invited to use these forms, or better yet, to adapt them to the special needs of community-based education programs in their own communities.

Student Learning Contract

STUDENT _____

TEACHER _____ SUBJECT _____

DATE _____ SEMESTER _____ GRADING PERIOD _____

OBJECTIVES:

ACTIVITIES:

Do you plan to utilize the community on an ongoing basis as part of your academic credit? YES _____ NO _____. If YES, a community contract must be attached and an evaluation submitted to receive credit for the activity.

TIME:

1. Regular individual conference times with teacher
2. Seminar meeting times
3. Length of contract

EVALUATION:

List Challenge Areas covered by activities in this learning contract: (At least two IN ADDITION TO cognitive skills)

STUDENT _____

TEACHER _____

PARENT _____

Student Contract for Intensives

STUDENT _____

INTENSIVE _____ DATES _____ TO _____

I plan to receive credit in the following courses:

OBJECTIVES: (List separately for each course.)

Course 1

Course 2

Course 3

Course 4

Course 5

ACTIVITIES:

LEARNING EVIDENCE:

MEANS OF EVALUATION:
List challenge areas covered by the activities in this learning contract:
If granted the request, how will you make up assignments missed in other classes?
DATE FOR SUBMITTING MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS:

I grant permission for the student in question to miss my class _____ days for an experiential learning activity.

TEACHER _____ COURSE _____

TEACHER _____ COURSE _____

TEACHER _____ COURSE _____

TEACHER _____ COURSE _____

TEACHER _____ COURSE _____

PARENT _____

STUDENT _____

PROGRAM DIRECTOR _____

Learning Unlimited Intensive Permission Slip

THIS PERMISSION SLIP MUST BE SIGNED AND DATED BY **BOTH** PARENTS IN ALL SPACES APPLICABLE.

I (we), parents(s) or legal guardian(s), do hereby grant permission for

_____ to participate in the intensive to

_____ from _____ to _____ sponsored by

LEARNING UNLIMITED, a part of the Metropolitan School District of Washington Township.

_____ _____ _____ _____

PARENT DATE PARENT DATE

I (we) do hereby release the Metropolitan District of Washington Township as well as the agents and employees thereof from any responsibility for personal injury suffered by any student or loss of personal property during the intensive to _____ scheduled _____ through _____. I (we) do hereby authorize _____ and/or _____ to submit my (our) child for any and all medical treatment which may appear to be appropriate and necessary.

_____ _____ _____ _____

PARENT DATE PARENT DATE

I (we) do hereby authorize the above-named minor child to sightsee in _____ unchaperoned.

_____ _____ _____ _____

PARENT DATE PARENT DATE

Student Contract for Community Learning Experience

STUDENT _____

SUBJECT _____ TEACHER _____

RESOURCE PERSON _____

DATE _____ SEMESTER _____ GRADING PERIOD _____

WHY? List your goals and objectives in this learning experience.

WHAT? List activities you will be regularly engaged in.

WHERE? Give address and phone of community learning site.

WHEN? List days, times you will be expected to be there.

HOW? Describe means of evaluation.

If applicable, list needs of resource person with respect to equipment, supplies, etc., which must be provided by you or by LEARNING UNLIMITED.

STUDENT _____

TEACHER _____

PARENT _____

RESOURCE PERSON _____

Student Evaluation of Community Experience

NAME OF STUDENT _____

NAME/ADDRESS OF ORGANIZATION OR BUSINESS _____

_____

NAME OF RESOURCE PERSON _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING EXPERIENCE:

BEGINNING DATE _____ ENDING DATE _____

PLEASE EVALUATE YOUR COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

1. Was it paced adequately; were you challenged, bored, stimulated, confused, etc.?
2. Were your questions answered satisfactorily?
3. Was what you learned equal to the amount of work you were expected to do?
4. Did you fulfill your contract? If not, why?
5. Were you adequately supervised?
6. Were you comfortable in the situation as a student, unpaid employee, adult . . . .
7. Were you given responsibilities? (too much, too little . . . explain)
8. Would you recommend this experience or another experience with the same resource person to another student?
9. Please rate the overall experience on a scale of one (excellent) to ten (poor).

Please feel free to include any additional comments on the other side of this form.

Evaluation of Student
By Community Resource Person

NAME OF STUDENT _____

NAME OF RESOURCE PERSON _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

Please evaluate the student in each of the following areas:

1. DEPENDABILITY (punctuality, attendance, degree of supervision required, responsibility assumed)

2. ATTITUDE (cooperation, interest, enthusiasm)

3. EFFORT (industry, initiative, self-reliance)

4. QUALITY OF PERFORMANCE

5. FULFILLMENT OF LEARNING CONTRACT

6. How would you rate this person's overall performance? You may assign a letter grade if desired.

7. Do you feel that there have been benefits from having a student worker?

8. Would you be interested in working with Learning Unlimited students again? If so, feel free to list on back any suggestions you have for possible projects or experiences.

SIGNED _____

DATE _____

PLEASE RETURN TO: Learning Unlimited
North Central High School
1801 E. 86th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46220

Resources

The following materials may give you practical suggestions as well as enthusiasm for creating your own community-based learning activities:

Barr, Robert D.; Burke, Daniel; and Smith, Vernon. *Alternatives In Education: Freedom To Choose*. Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa, 1976.

Identifies and defines a wide variety of optional programs and schools now operating on public funds.

Carter, Barbara, and Dapper, Gloria. *School Volunteers: What They Do and How They Do It*. New York: Citation Press, 1972.

A clear, concise guide to what adult volunteers can do for and in schools and how to help them perform effectively.

Walkabout Newsletter. Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa.

This newsletter on the Walkabout concept contains articles by people working in the field, book reviews, program descriptions, and interviews.

Exchange. Washington, D.C.: IDEAS.

A quarterly magazine, published by IDEAS, is an information exchange for Foxfire inspired projects.

Flaxman, Anne, and Homestead, Kerry Christensen, editors. *1977-78 National Directory of Public Alternative Schools*. Amherst, Massachusetts: NASP, School of Education, University of Massachusetts, 1978.

Gibbons, Maurice. "The Australian Walkabout: A Model for Transition to Adulthood." *Phi Delta Kappan* 55 (May, 1974): 596-602.

A discussion on how modern educators can adapt this tribal custom to help students create meaningful, authentic, learning experiences.

Keyes, Ralph. *Is There Life After High School?*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1976.

A humorous, but very perceptive view of the American high school experience.

Koberg, Dan, and Bagnall, Jim. *The Universal Traveler*. Los Altos, Calif.: William Kaufman, Inc., 1972.

A guide to developing alternatives through creative problem solving.

Nader, Ralph, and Ross, Donald. *Action for a Change: A Student's Manual for Public Interest Organizing*, New York: Grossman Publishers, 1972.

An action manual for students who want to work on some of the real problems facing their cities and states. Practical ideas for projects and organization of public interest research groups.

National Commission on Resources for Youth. *New Roles for Youth in the Schools and Community*. New York: Citation Press, 1974.

A series of case studies on students involved in innovative projects in their communities.

Postman, Neil, and Weingartner, Charles. *The Soft Revolution*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1971.

Ideas for students and teachers who want to change the educational system from the inside.

Wigginton, Eliot. *Moments*. Washington, D.C.: IDEAS, 1975

Eliot Wigginton, the founder and director of the Foxfire Project at Rabun Gap, Georgia, makes a personal and philosophical statement as a teacher. A good combination of philosophy and common sense.

Wurman, Richard Saul. *The Yellow Pages of Learning Resources*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1972.

From "accountant" to "zoo" — as comprehensive a list of learning resources as one can find in any city.

You and Aunt Arie. Washington, D.C.: IDEAS, 1975.

A step-by-step guide for students interested in creating Foxfire projects.